



Press Release:

London Keep Our NHS Public

For immediate release: Friday 2 September

Save the NHS – Protest calls on MPs to Kill the Bill

NHS staff and supporters will be taking to the streets next Wednesday 7 September to defend the NHS and urge MPs to vote against the Health and Social Care Bill.

London Keep Our NHS Public, alongside Unite, the Health Worker Network and Right to Work are calling a mass protest and march from **St Thomas Hospital to the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday 7 September**, the day the Bill enters parliament for its third reading [1]. The protest from 6.30 pm will end with a rally and support for the candle-lit vigil called by the TUC and health unions.

The Bill continues to pose a grave threat to the National Health Service and the right of every person to free, comprehensive health care. The Government's claims that they have amended the Bill to prevent marketisation are false and they are misleading the public by saying that "there will be no privatisation of the NHS". Only parts of the amended Bill were seen at Committee stage and it is now being rushed through Parliament before MPs are able to properly scrutinise the details.

All the leading health unions are still opposed to the reforms and are calling for the revised Bill to be withdrawn [2-5]. Furthermore, independent legal opinions on the amendments have now exposed the Government's lies, showing that the Secretary of State will no longer be legally responsible for health provision and that competition will be enhanced [6,7].

We urge all NHS supporters to join us to demand a stop to the Bill. We say:

- The Health and Social Care Bill must be scrapped
- The Government must commit to sustained investment in the NHS and stop all cuts in jobs and services
- No to privatising the NHS and creating a market in health care

Candy Udwin, Chair of London Keep Our NHS Public, said: "As predicted the Government's 'listening exercise' was a sham and the main problems with the Health Bill remain the same. They will lead to full-scale privatisation of the NHS and a health service run for profit instead of the needs of patients.

"Already we are seeing private firms dropping less profitable services to chase the lucrative contracts, leaving patients without the care they really need."

Julie Sherry, Right to Work national steering committee, said: "The Health and Social Care Bill represents the end of the NHS as we know it. It is typical of this Tory led Con-Dem government's desire to reshape our society in the interests of big business, and a central plank of the overall austerity agenda to make working class people pay for the economic crisis.

"We pay taxes to fund our NHS as a freely accessible and publicly accountable service – the vast majority of people rely on it and the attack on it affects us all. Yet this government is prioritising the bankers and the rich while they begin their mission of dismantling the welfare state, affecting the lives of millions who depend on it. That is why it is so important to join the protest on Wednesday."

1. Protestors will be assembling on **Wednesday 7 September at 6.30 pm outside St Thomas Hospital, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7EH** to march on Parliament. Rallies with speeches will be held at the beginning and the end of the protest and marches will stay to join the candle-lit vigil at 9.30 pm. See Right to Work <http://righttowork.org.uk/2011/08/a-week-to-save-the-nhs/>
2. BMA renews call to withdraw Bill: <http://www.gponline.com/News/article/1077302/BMA-votes-Health-Bill-withdrawal/>
3. Unite – Medical Practitioners Union petition: http://nhs.unitetheunion.org/page/s/gp-signup-form?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Unite&utm_campaign=20110720GPletter&source=20110720GPletter
4. Unison joins unions and RCGP http://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/newsarticle-content/-/article_display_list/12590209/union-joins-growing-backlash-against-revised-health-bill
5. Guardian interview with Dr Hamish Meldrum <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/sep/01/nhs-plans-put-wealthy-first>
6. <http://www.38degrees.org.uk/page/content/NHS-legal-advice/>
7. <http://www.dutytoprovide.net/>

Notes for Editors

For further information including media briefing outlining the Government's proposals and the campaign's response in more detail, please contact:

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