

Dr Lansley's monster

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The [editorial of the latest edition of the British Medical Journal](#) does not pull its punches:

What do you call a government that embarks on the biggest upheaval of the NHS in its 63 year history, at breakneck speed, while simultaneously trying to make unprecedented financial savings? The politically correct answer has got to be: mad.

The scale of ambition should ring alarm bells. Sir David Nicholson, the NHS chief executive, has described the proposals as the biggest change management programme in the world – the only one so large “that you can actually see it from space.” (More ominously, he added that one of the lessons of change management is that “most big change management systems fail.”) Of the annual 4% efficiency savings expected of the NHS over the next four years, the Commons health select committee said, “The scale of this is without precedent in NHS history; and there is no known example of such a feat being achieved by any other healthcare system in the world.” To pull off either of these challenges would therefore be breathtaking; to believe that you could manage both of them at once is deluded.

Mad and deluded.

From a calm, professional journal of a profession that has an extraordinary public standing, this is powerful - and in my opinion wholly appropriate - comment.