

Funding the Future

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As [the Guardian reports](#):

The government's health service reforms could lead to GP practices being partially floated on the stock market, it has emerged.

As they explain:

In documents obtained by Channel 4 News and passed to the Guardian, one private health firm, IHP, proposes that the commissioning budget for patients be handed over to a private company in which family [doctors](#) would own a 20% stake.

IHP is in talks with three GP consortiums to set up a company that would turn underspends in their annual budget — in effect, savings on patient spending — into profits. This company, which aims to list on the stock market in three to five years, would treat patients at 95% of the cost of the NHS. This putative saving, amounting to £40 per patient, would be booked as "profit".

Each GP has about 2,000 patients. That's an £8 share for each GP then, or £16,000 as a bonus.

And I'm afraid to say that there are GPs out there stupid enough to do this - and destroy the NHS in the process.

I declare my usual interest - my wife is a GP - and I say this is wrong. And must be stopped. It's another example of the private sector '[enclosing the commons](#)' for the private gain of an elite in society (and yes, GPs can be described as such).

I am sure this is exactly what Andrew Lansley wants.

I believe it will destroy patient care in the UK - and massively increase NHS costs. But who will care in the privatised company on a twenty year contract? No one: they'll just watch the profits roiling in.

Which is why Labour has to say such enterprises will be nationalised when they get back to power. And they have to say it now.