

# Paul Bell

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The Baroness Parminter  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

Dear Baroness Parminter,

I am writing this letter to you to urge you to reject the Health & Social Care Bill. I do not do this lightly and it is the first time I have written to a member of the House of Lords. However, I want to share my story with you and ask that you think it about it when you go to vote.

I have cancer, Leukaemia to be precise, and while I am currently in remission, I am frightened by the changes proposed; I have to take daily medication that makes my immune system weak. This is quite a shocking statement for a forty-year old man to admit, but I am, as this government is on a determined path to bring in American style healthcare to this country.

I used to live in the United States; I worked for a charity that campaigned to end hunger and poverty not just in the developing world, but also in the United States. Speaking with sick and poor Americans, they said time and time again three chilling words - 'pre-existing medical conditions'. What this meant, and means now when you take out travel insurance, is that existing conditions such as diabetes, cancer, a hole in the heart, high blood pressure, I could go on, are a 'get-out-clause' for insurance companies whose motivator is not to treat the sick based on clinical need, but on how to make the most profit. Bonuses and incentives are paid if less people are approved for medical treatment.

Ask yourself, do you really want that in the United Kingdom? Now I know, Tory ministers especially, will say that this is not the case, but consider what is really happening:-

1. Funding is already being squeezed, waiting times are increasing and hospitals have stretched budgets.
2. With slower, less focussed treatment, the public will become increasingly disenchanted with the NHS based on their experiences; experiences that will become vocalised.
3. These experiences will then be shaped into a call for a change, a quicker more responsive health care system.
4. Then in steps the private sector, already boosted by GPs commissioning services from enlarged, more capital rich

companies, who will then call for a health insurance based system.

5. A domino effect will begin, with more services transferred to multi-national companies whose motivator is to make profit; the stock market does not reward companies on how many hip operations performed or tumours removed, but on perceived profitability.
6. The final logical step is to then bring in health insurance for those that can get it.

But what about the rest of us? Do you know someone with cancer? What about an older person, a child from a poor family, an asthma sufferer? **We will not get treated. I will not get treated.**

This is the reality of daily life in the United States. If you want further evidence, then there are plenty of resources on the internet. However, a closer to home example, is to get a quote for health insurance to travel abroad.

Earlier this year, I looked at travel insurance for myself to spend 12 days in Hong Kong. With all of my medical conditions, the quotes ranged from £980 to £1300 for 12 days. And the added special dose of humanity was a clause that stated all pre-existing conditions would be assessed to see if they had a contributing factor to the claim. In reality this meant, if I had a heart attack for example, I would not be covered as diabetes is linked to heart disease.

I appeal to you as a fellow human being to reject these proposals. I believe that health care is a basic human right. Please join me and millions of people like me, along with future generations that do not want the words: 'You have cancer...' followed by, '...your insurance does not cover you for treatment'.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Bell