

[Professor Maynard on healthcare](#) [1]

Written by [Anton Howes](#) [2] | Tuesday 3 August 2010



To the joy of many NHS trusts, Labour's cap on revenues from paying patients is to be lifted. The potentially huge revenues for hospitals will enable them to reinvest profits in free NHS services as well as boosting the provision of private healthcare in the UK. Hospitals such as Moorfields, with ventures in Dubai, and the Royal Marsden, with a much higher cap due to historical anomaly, will be well placed to expand their revenues. Manchester Christie hospital is even eagerly looking forward to the trebling of its income over the next decade, and the construction of a new £14m cancer centre as a result of the policy change.

You'll be surprised to learn that I gathered this great news [from *The Guardian*](#) [3]. Naturally, the paper also gave voice to some ridiculous objections:

What's to stop US healthcare companies coming over here to poach patients. Or GPs sending patients to India for cheap operations? Or English hospitals raiding Scotland for sick people?" said Alan Maynard, professor of health economics at the University of York.

The answer to these questions is, of course, "nothing, and why not?". If Scotland has sick people, then why should they be denied better treatment, irrespective of its source? Scottish patients are not some kind of 'turf' to be jealously guarded much like a suburban gang defends its patch - that kind of mentality entrenched in regulation or law simply leads to Scots receiving poor healthcare for the peace of mind of inadequate NHS trusts.

Patients are not there to be poached, they are there to be provided for, making their own decisions as to where they want to go. If US companies can entice patients, then the NHS must be underperforming and may well up its act to prevent patients from being lost. Likewise, if Indian operations are cheaper, and patients choose to go along with them, what's the problem? Essentially, Professor Maynard dislikes the idea of supply attempting to meet demand - his comments display an alarming belief in health protectionism, favouring public health providers to the direct detriment of patients. *Health economics?* Please.

[blog comments powered by Disqus](#) [5]

Links:

- [1] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/health/professor-maynard-on-healthcare>
- [2] <http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5795>
- [3] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/aug/01/nhs-trusts-private-patients>
- [4] http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript
- [5] <http://disqus.com>