

Dear Dr

In the news at the moment are many stories about the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP), which will restructure the NHS. But what exactly are they?

These plans, which carve up England in to 44 STP 'footprints', **will reduce the number of A&E hospitals from 144 to between 40-70 in England.**

That means: **fewer** hospital beds; **longer** ambulance journeys for emergency care; **longer** waiting times for treatment and reductions in what treatments will be provided 'on the NHS'; more work moved into the community and into GP practices ¹without additional resources to cope.

The STP process so far has exposed a trend of closures – in fact, an RCEM survey revealed that almost a third of CCG leaders are considering shutting down emergency departments. ²The royal college warned that this would also be matched with a reduction in beds and full-time acute staff over the next 12-18 months, resulting in "potentially catastrophic" plans that will "put lives at risk".

These plans have been forced on local areas by NHS England. They are part of the 5 Year Forward View and they will be even more damaging than the 2012 Health and Social Care Act. The first stage of implementation of the STPs is due to be signed off on 23rd December. BMA London has voted unanimously to advise CCGs not to cooperate with the plans.³

Please join our campaign - we need you - the NHS clinical staff who provide the service – to join with patient groups and other campaigners to say 'NO' and STOP the STPs.

Make NHS England go back to the drawing board and start a proper consultation process with the public and clinicians. Demand that the NHS stop wasting its money on endless 'transformation' projects. It needs increased funding without programmes that de-professionalise the service, create barriers to access or re-shape the service to suit an agenda that favours private providers over public service and builds in profit opportunity.

Politicians and senior NHS managers insist that the only thing that matters is that the NHS remains 'free at the point of need'. But if the NHS is not comprehensive, universal and accessible, if it only offers a restricted menu of low cost treatments, then it is no longer 'the NHS'. It's a logo for a second class service for those who can't pay, with the state only picking up the tab for high risk, low profit complex long-term care and emergency treatments while the private sector profits from the rest.

We must say 'no' to that, loud and clear.

Please find below your nearest local campaign group and other national groups which offer information and help. Please join us. There really isn't much time left. It's your work, but it's everybody's NHS.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

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For more information or to get involved in the campaign, have a look at the following NHS organisations:
Doctors for the NHS: www.doctorsforthenhs@org.uk Keep Our NHS Public: <http://keepournhspublic.com/> 999 Call for the NHS: <http://999callforthe NHS.org.uk/> Momentum NHS: www.peoplesmomentum.com/momentum-nhs
Health Campaigns Together: www.healthcampaignstogether.com

¹ GP Online "GPs slam STP proposal to shift 'massive amounts' of work into general practice", 18/08/2016.

² National Health Executive "Emergency department closures in one-third of STPs 'will put lives at risk'" 01/11/2016

³ Pulse News: "BMA London has voted unanimously to advise CCGs not to 'cooperate' with the plans being drawn up for changes to NHS services around the country." 1/11/2016