

Press release on behalf of Keep Our NHS Public – for immediate use

NHS Patients and campaigners take Centene to court over their takeover of dozens of GP surgeries

Beginning 9am on Tuesday 1st February 2022, a two-day judicial review hearing will be held at the London High Courts by campaigners and patients to challenge the NHS Commissioners' decision to allow Centene Corporation's private take-over of dozens of London GP surgeries, via its UK subsidiaries MH Services International Holdings (UK) and Operose Health Ltd. [1]

The Judicial Review [2] is being brought by Anjna Khurana, an NHS Patient and Islington councillor. Ms Khurana is one of around 375,000 patients across London who were told nothing about this takeover of their GP surgeries until after the event.

Ms. Khurana's Judicial Review is a crowdfunded initiative and is supported by a team of NHS campaigners from organisations *Keep our NHS Public*, [3] *999 Call for the NHS* [4] and *Doctors in Unite*, [5].

The Court will rule whether, in making their decision, the NHS Commissioners acted unlawfully in three respects –

1. Misdirection - they failed to consider all the implications of the take-over because they assumed they had no choice but to accept and approve the proposal
2. Lack of due diligence - they failed to give due consideration to the risk to patients, if the GP contracts they agreed to transfer to Operose Health turned out not to meet its parent company Centene's profitability targets
3. Lack of consultation/involvement

The Judicial Review will ask the London High Courts to quash the decision by North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group to approve the Centene takeover. Since the news broke a year ago hundreds of patients, councillors and members of the public have written letters, protested outside surgeries and have made their feelings clear.

Claimant Anjna Khurana said:

“Like everyone else, I want to feel I can rely on my GP to be on my side. That is what we get with the NHS. But without my knowledge, my surgery has been sold to a giant American healthcare company, one with a very poor reputation. How can that be right? I needed to stand up and make my voice heard. So many people have been in touch to let me know they support me that I know I am not alone. We cannot allow this stealth privatisation of the NHS to carry on.”

London GP and member of *Keep Our NHS Public* Dr Louise Irvine says:

“Of course patients are worried. When a large American corporation like Centene takes over this many GP practices we have to question their motive. In America they are sued regularly for fraud and malpractice and we do not need their profit seeking behaviour dictating the quality of healthcare for patients and the working conditions for staff. It’s a deeply worrying situation and I am delighted that the High Court has seen the important public interest in this case”.

Steven Carne, Chair of *999 Call for the NHS* says:

“London NHS Commissioners have allowed Operose/Centene to become one of the largest NHS Primary Care Providers in England. They could become major players in the new NHS ‘Integrated Care Boards’ that the Government are trying to create with their Health and Care Bill. Having American companies making key commissioning decisions about our NHS is not acceptable.”

[ends]

Spokespeople are available for broadcast interview.

Contact challengeohl@gmail.com

or call/WhatsApp Dr Louise Irvine on 07922 277395 or Professor Sue Richards on 07407 379194

Notes to editors

[1] Further information on the takeover and legal campaign can be found

here: [375K London GP patients sold to company owned by US subprime health insurance profiteer – Calderdale and Kirklees 999 Call for the NHS \(wordpress.com\)](#)

[2] Anjna Khurana's legal team is the public law firm Leigh Day, Adam Straw QC from Doughty St Chambers and Leon Glenister from Landmark Chambers

[3] Keep Our NHS Public is an independent organisation campaigning for a properly funded and fully publicly owned NHS: <https://keepournhspublic.com/>

[4] 999 Call for the NHS is a campaigning group: [Calderdale and Kirklees 999 Call for the NHS – It's our NHS – the profiteers, privatisers and austerity liars can jog on \(wordpress.com\)](#)

[5] Doctors in Unite is the UK's oldest medical trade union representing junior doctors, general practitioners and hospital consultants: <https://doctorsinunite.com/>