

# PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (30 March)

## Campaigners march on Department of Health in outrage at Camden NHS privatisation

**Protest outside Department of Health: 5.30pm, Monday 31 March**

Health campaigners, doctors and Camden residents will march to the Department of Health on Monday afternoon (31 March) in protest against the takeover of three North London GP surgeries by American corporation United Health.

The decision of Camden Primary Care Trust to award the contract to United Health after a competitive tender has caused outrage in the borough after it was revealed that the company's bid scored less well than those of local GPs on clinical matters. The American multinational appears to have been favoured due to its promise of substantial cost cutting, sparking fear among patients that the standard of care will decline.

A legal bid has already been launched to try to block the contract, with local patient Barbara Saunders seeking a judicial review on the grounds of inadequate consultation.

At a public meeting last week over 200 residents passed a unanimous vote of no confidence in their PCT. The health scrutiny committee of the local authority has vowed to take up the matter.

Gordon Brown is an enthusiast for more private involvement in GP services, making primary care the focus of NHS privatisation. But Frank Dobson, the former Health Secretary and the MP in the Camden area has said the Camden contract "goes against the ethos of the NHS" and has described United Health as "crooks", referring to the company's repeated involvement in fraud cases in the US.

On Monday, angry residents and health campaigners will protest at the Department of Health from 5.30 to 6.30pm, and will hand in a petition against the takeover.

**Professor Wendy Savage of Keep Our NHS Public said:**

"The Government's attempts to privatise GP surgeries are deeply unpopular. When people actually see it happen in their own area, to their own doctors' surgery, they react with justifiable anger.

"We hear all the rhetoric about a patient-led NHS, but that seems to mean nothing if the patients disagree with the Government's privatisation policies. So we will protest outside the Department of Health to make sure they can hear us. This battle against United Health in Camden has become the front line in the fight against privatisation."

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