

Brief submission

I think there is a role for private sector health care operating concurrently with public health. It can lead to positive changes such as a greater emphasis on disease prevention and wellness and support for self-management. These things save money which is the driver, but they also benefit individuals and society. However, a profit driven, largely privatised health service in the absence of free and equitable public health will lead to some truly awful consequences. Already primary care services are suboptimal due to GP practices running as businesses. It leads to shortcuts during consultations (time is money) and people with complex or chronic problems struggling to get the treatment they need. In the long term their health is worse off because they are not cost efficient to treat in the short term. Unless people are given good access to GPs and other allied health professionals, and unless preventable or curable diseases are picked up early, then costs of care for many people will be higher over the long term. The first services to go in a privatised system are those that will lead to more costly health care in the future.

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