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In November 2017, the level of strain on the NHS was revealed. £2.8 billion has been added to the original budget issued to the NHS for the next three years, highlighting the strain was larger than anticipated. With this in mind, and when factoring in that an average patient costs the NHS £2069 per year, perhaps the influx of private patients isn't so bad after all; the stress relief on the Health Service could actually help those still using it! In other words, privatisation doesn't mean the collapse of the NHS, but rather the *relief* on money and space by offering more private care to those with the means to afford it.

It's worth mentioning that if, for any reason, an NHS patient uses private care throughout their life, it will not affect their NHS privileges. In other words, private treatment is shaping up to be its own form of health service, as opposed to the ending of another – the NHS.

Contrastively, it isn't all excusable. There are some drawbacks to privatisation. As with any change to a governmental organisation, there is often a divide in society. With private health care, it seems obvious that the more affluent will be able to afford it much easier than those with less money. With this in mind, it is possible that the rise in private care will leave the NHS with a certain division of the country, and private care with another division. This type of divide is never healthy, and could potentially make it harder to provide the same level of quality to everyone. As well as this, private companies

have no obligation to the health of an individual; after all, they are a profitable organisation. Because of this, these companies are able to pick and choose exactly what services they offer, meaning they might not all be as useful as once thought.

With this in mind, let's take a further look at privatisation. But this time, let's take it overseas to the United States. Privatisation is anything but new in America, and yet it's still not the polished product. For example, after four hours in the U.K, a patient will have seen a doctor *and* been treated; in the U.S, it takes an average of three hours just to be *seen* by a doctor. Perhaps this has something to do with the 'first-come, first serve' ideology the U.S health system has. In other words, if a call is made to a doctor in America, the patient will be seen whenever is convenient not for the patient, but for the doctor. With the NHS in the U.K, however, a patient is assigned an appointment almost immediately; the requirements of the local health authority mean faster and more efficient service. Alongside this, time is never wasted; in the U.S, a common cold or flu is treated as equally as a patient awaiting a much more serious ailment. The reason behind this is the profit that all appointments bring to the privatised health services and insurance companies; in the U.K, however, with its free National Health Service, the discouragement of minor health issues means that those with more pressing issues can be seen, as well as a much better use of time and resources.

