



**Royal College
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Setting higher medical standards

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Cooperation and Competition Panel
1 Horse Guards Road
London
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From The Registrar
Rodney Burnham MD FRCP

26th June 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Cooperation & Competition Panel – Non-contracted hours study – follow-up

The Royal College of Physicians is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. We would like to make the following comments:

Consultants should be free to do what they want in their spare time (e.g. working for a different Trust, performing private or fee-paid work), as long as it does not affect the care of their patients. This is enshrined in the current contract and any breach (e.g. a consultant overworking resulting in a poor service to his or her Trust) could result in action being taken.

Whether or not a consultant works for an alternative provider the basic tenet is that patient care should be the first priority. It is of greater importance that more patients are looked after properly across the nation. Whatever ensures more excellent health care across the country should be encouraged. The College believes that cooperation and collaboration is to be preferred to competition between organisations (Redefining Healthcare 2006; Porter & Teisberg). The evidence from the USA suggests that the only valuable competition is on outcomes, rather than competition between organisations.

I trust these comments will be of use.

Yours faithfully

Dr Rodney Burnham
Registrar

