

A bill restructuring the UK health service has been passed by parliament in spite of mass protests against the controversial reforms. Opposition accuses MPs of pandering to private interests, signing the death warrant of free healthcare in the UK.

The government maintains that the new legislation that dissolves primary care trusts, responsible for purchasing care on behalf of patients are part of £20 million of "efficiency savings". But critics say it will cause chaos and leave the service open to privatisation.

A draft risk register leaked to the UK press, details the consequences of the severe cuts to the NHS budget. The UK government had previously come under fire for defying a ruling by the information commissioner to publish the Risk Register.

Perhaps the most distressing find of the document is that the new reforms could lead to a severe worsening of the emergency services. "The NHS role in emergency preparedness /responsiveness is more difficult to manage through a more devolved organization, and so emergencies are less well managed/ mitigated," says the report.

It outlines the "risk of delays, performance dips and key staff lost", also it says that the new reforms will lead to greater use of the private sector "which adds costs to the overall system.

Since the Parliament pushed the bill through last Monday demonstrators have flooded the streets throughout the UK concerned that the bill will lead to the privatization of the service. The reforms came after 14 months of parliamentary bickering which split the country's coalition government in two, pitting almost every major medical health body against politicians.

The opposing Labour Party has promised to abolish the legislation if they win the next election. The reforms will not come into force officially until the Queen has signs the bill before Easter.

### **Playing to MPs' financial interests**

Although PM David Cameron says that private investment is what the NHS needs in order to keep afloat during the financial crisis, many critics accuse politicians of serving their own financial interests with the new legislation.

*"They're directors on the boards, they're the owners, they have shares in the companies, and yet, with these vested interests, they are allowed to vote on a health and social care bill with these private healthcare interests,"* investigative journalist Andrew Robertson told RT correspondent Laura Smith.

A gleaming example of the UK government pandering to private investments comes in the form of Dolar Popat, a care homes tycoon who has donated more the 200,000 pounds to the conservative party. In return for his donation, he was granted patronage and a title.

Moreover, health secretary Andrew Lansley who championed the new bill received 21,000 pounds to fund his office from UK Care. There are worries that the new bill will soften up the NHS leaving it up for grabs for these favoured private interests.

*"We're starting to see a number of private health interests start to look at cherry-picking some of the best, most profitable parts of the health service. They were just waiting for it go through and are ready to pounce,"* UK MP Andrew Gwynne said to RT