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Upfront charging of overseas patients

The BMA Annual Representative Meeting last month carried a motion proposed by Dr Jackie Applebee, of Tower Hamlets Division, stating: “That this meeting calls on the BMA to publicly support the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Faculty of Public Health in their call for the suspension of regulations that force hospitals to charge overseas visitors upfront for NHS care.”

Coincidentally, on the same day the motion was debated at conference, the Government were being questioned on the issue by the Health and Social Care Select Committee (HSCSC). Stephen Hammond MP, Minister of State for Health and MP for Wimbledon, was questioned alongside Sir Chris Wormold, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health and Social Care.

Dr Paul Williams MP, committee member and GP, asked Stephen Hammond about a review of changes to the rules regarding charging overseas patients, conducted by DHSC, which concluded that the changes had not deterred overseas visitors from using the NHS. In particular, Paul Williams wanted to know why the DHSC had refused repeated requests for the HSCSC to be allowed to see the document, resulting in Chris Wormold correcting the Minister to say that the report did not contain findings about the effects of the charging regime as a whole.

The session concluded without a commitment to publish the review which the HSCSC had asked for.

The full transcript of the Health Select Committee session can be read [here](#).