

PRESS RELEASE



News from Keep Our NHS Public campaign www.keepournhspublic.com

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NHS STRIKE: US health supplier in UK says British government is dealing with a “criminal organisation”

Philip Zweig of US company Retractable Technologies is in Manchester to speak about the corrupt business practices of Novation, the company sub-contracted by DHL to carry out procurement in the latest NHS privatisation. He will address a Keep Our NHS Public fringe meeting at the **Labour Party Conference** in Manchester on Tuesday 26 September; the same day that Unison workers begin a second one-day **strike** over the privatisation. Zweig will be available for comment throughout the week.

Zweig says that the British government is dealing with a “criminal organisation”. His company developed a new kind of blood collection device that protects nurses from HIV and hepatitis. These could be produced for 27 cents a time, but Novation suggested adding their private label and inflating the price to a dollar, splitting the extra profits. Retractable Technologies eventually received a \$155 million settlement from Novation and other companies over allegations that they conspired to prevent hospitals buying the product.

The US Justice Department is conducting a broad ranging criminal investigation into whether Novation and other companies have defrauded the US public health system. Bribery is one of the violations the Department of Justice is investigating.

Zweig is convinced that, contrary to the Government’s claims, in the UK Novation will not only stifle innovative technologies and put small suppliers out of business, but will actually inflate prices and cost the NHS more.

He is so concerned about the damage that Novation could do to the NHS that he has boarded a plane to warn us in person.

Zweig said: "Putting Novation in charge of NHS supplies is like appointing Jack the Ripper to run your Neighborhood Watch. Novation is a corrupt organization that is under criminal investigation by the U.S. Justice Department and other agencies. Reams of evidence demonstrate that the corrupt practices of Novation and its big supplier partners actually inflate U.S. healthcare costs.

"Novation is at the centre of a massive bribery/kickback scheme in the £55 billion U.S. healthcare purchasing system. It currently runs from Maine to Hawaii, but on October 1 - unless your Health Ministry comes to its senses - it will extend its reach across the pond to ensnare the NHS as well.

"If Health Secretary Hewitt really believes that Novation will save British taxpayers money, then I have a bridge in New York City that I'd like to sell her."

Zweig will speak at the Keep Our NHS Public meeting '**NHS market reform: what's the alternative?**' on Tuesday 26 September, 6 – 8pm at the Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess Street, Manchester (just 5 minutes walk from GMEX). Other speakers include **John McDonnell MP**, Labour leadership candidate; **Neal Lawson**, Chair of Compass; **Debbie Abrahams**, former Chair of Rochdale PCT who recently resigned over the growing privatisation of the NHS; and **Alex Scott Samuel**, health policy analyst and writer.

CONTACT:

Philip Zweig will be available for comment throughout the week. He will be in Manchester until Wednesday 27th, and in London thereafter. To arrange an interview call **001 21491 27415**, leave a voicemail message and he will ring straight back (his phone will not accept incoming calls in the UK). Alternatively, call Alex Nunns on 07763 607 528.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Philip Zweig and his case have been mentioned in the Times and the Mail On Sunday (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,8122-2292710.html> ;

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=398256&in_page_id=1770&in_a_source). He has more evidence and information than either paper published.

2. Zweig is involved with a US campaign called Stop GPO Kickbacks, which highlights corruption in the American hospital supply system. <http://www.stopgpokickbacks.org/>

3. Keep Our NHS Public is a grass-roots campaign that brings together patient groups, doctors, health service unions, academics and concerned citizens. It was formed last year in response to the government's acceleration of market reforms. It is against Independent Sector Treatment Centres, the private takeover of GP surgeries and community health services, the outsourcing of NHS commissioning and PFI. It is in favour of a genuinely patient-centred NHS, with greater democratic control at the local level and sensible planning to meet identified needs. It is funded through individual donations and affiliation fees.

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