

Letters to the Editor

Times 28.7.17



Heart surgery plea

Sir, As medical professionals working in cardiovascular, respiratory and paediatric care, we urge the health secretary to block plans to decommission congenital heart disease (CHD) services at Royal Brompton Hospital. This plan would affect more than 14,000 patients and 400 staff and would cost tens of millions of pounds, yet it is difficult to identify where any patient benefit would accrue. Official data show that Royal Brompton's CHD service is the largest in the UK, with excellent patient outcomes. The Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust's adult CHD research team is independently rated as the most influential in the world.

NHS England's plan will result in the closure of Royal Brompton's paediatric intensive care unit (PICU), losing a sixth of London's PICU beds at a time when there is already a widely publicised shortage in London and the south. The lack of a PICU would in turn occasion the loss of other heart and lung services treating thousands of patients, including the country's largest paediatric cystic fibrosis and difficult asthma services. DR DAVID ROSS, consultant paediatric cardiac surgeon, University of Alberta Hospital; DR GARY WEBB, consultant cardiologist, Cincinnati Children's Hospital; PROFESSOR JU LE TAN, senior cardiology consultant, National Heart Centre Singapore; PROFESSOR PAUL KHAIRY, director, Adult Congenital Heart Centre, Montreal Heart Institute; PROFESSOR TAL GEVA, professor of paediatrics, Boston Children's Hospital & Harvard Medical School; DR LISA HORNBERGER, professor of paediatrics and consultant cardiologist, University of Alberta & Stollery Children's Hospital
Plus a further 210 signatories at thetimes.co.uk/letters