



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on January 30, 2018

Left Blames Brexit for Problems of Britain's Socialist Healthcare System

Underfunding by a “miserly” Conservative government, the exceptionally cold winter, and the higher number of flu cases are all being blamed for the present problems of the United Kingdom's socialist National Health Service. Blaming everything but the inherent flaws of any socialized industry, the left-leaning media, including the Associated Press (AP) and the *New York Times* have now seized upon a new supposed culprit: Brexit.



For example, the AP, in an article by Jill Lawless, who has written on events in Britain for several years, cited the “usual suspects” — supposed underfunding, the weather, the flu bug — but she also cast some of the blame on the decision of the people of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. “Britain's decision to leave the European Union next year is making the situation worse for the National Health Service,” Lawless claimed.

How so? According to Lawless, “Brexit has brought new complications. Britain's vote in June 2016 to leave the 28-nation EU — and end the automatic right of EU citizens to live in the U.K. — threw the future of 3 million Europeans in Britain into doubt. That has prompted some to leave and deterred other Europeans from moving in.”

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This has made it more difficult to recruit medical staff, Lawless argues, although even she admits the percent of NHS employees who are not British is only about five percent.

But, of those five percent, many are worried about their status in Britain after Brexit becomes finalized, and 67 percent of European nurses have left the U.K., Lawless' article noted. This is an example of how statistics can be reported in such a way as to put things in the worst possible light. While 67 percent sounds like no one is left to be a nurse in the U.K., the reality is that there are still 700,000 registered nurses in Britain, and the number leaving represents only two-tenths of one percent of the total number.

NHS leaders concede how small the percentage of nurses leaving the U.K. is, but still consider it an alarming situation because they are already struggling to meet the “relentless rise in demand.” As Lawless reported, demand is growing four percent per year, as the British population “gets larger and older.”

This situation, of course, is not unique to Britain's National Health Service, but is a problem experienced in all nations that adopt socialist systems. Since no person is paying directly for medical services, there exists no incentive for a person to not seek medical care or to haggle about the price of the services received. It would be remarkable if demand was not growing.

On the other hand, if the population of Britain is growing, then why are not more people choosing to



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enter the medical field as doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers? After all, if they would be entering a business where there is an ever-increasing number of consumers, one would think that such “job security” would entice an increasing number of healthcare personnel.

Maybe working in a socialist industry is not all that grand of a job.

Even the *New York Times*, in a long article published last fall that likewise attempted to blame Brexit for the problems faced by the NHS, said, “Long before Brexit, the NHS suffered from chronic staffing shortages, and today the country has 40,000 nursing vacancies.” The *Times* article, however, managed to blame Brexit anyway, because “recruiting nurses from the European Union had helped plug the gap.”

But now, the *Times* argued, the “legal status” of EU citizens living in Britain is “unclear, entangled in the stalled Brexit talks between Brussels and London.”

While Brexit is seen as a problem in maintaining the viability of the NHS, such as it is, the facts are that the number of EU staffers in the NHS actually grew in the months since Brexit.

The media’s reporting, castigating Brexit while praising the NHS raises an interesting point. Opponents of “free trade” agreements, such as the ones that led to the European Union super-state, are often accused of somehow being enemies of the free market. In this case, however, the supporters of the socialist healthcare system and the European Union are largely the same people. The hard reality is that so-called free trade agreements, such as the ones that eventually created the EU and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) are anything but “free market” agreements, but rather managed trade deals, with heavy government regulation of the market. Note that a uniformly socialized industry such as healthcare is no problem for the ideology that drives the EU.

Second, those in our own country who have wisely opposed socialization of American healthcare should understand that multilateral trade deals inevitably lead to loss of national sovereignty and an increase in government regulation. A socialist healthcare system fits in perfectly with a super-state such as the EU.

Any hope that Americans have of getting a more free market-oriented healthcare system requires that the United States not just “improve” NAFTA, but leave it. As Britain wisely did Brexit, Americans need to exit NAFTA.

Image: Screenshot of [website of the British Nursing Association](#)



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