

# Consultants pass vote of no confidence in Andrew Lansley

8 March, 2012 - HSJ

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Consultants yesterday defied British Medical Association chair Hamish Meldrum to pass a motion of no confidence in the health secretary.

Delegates at the BMA consultants committee conference voted by an estimated margin of 4:1 to pass a motion of no confidence in Andrew Lansley.

Kevin O’Kane, the acute medical consultant at Guy’s and St Thomas’ Foundation Trust who proposed the motion, accused the health secretary of failing to reveal before the election that he was planning “this top-down reorganisation of the NHS”, despite being shadow health secretary for six years.

“This motion will help address the myth that Andrew Lansley has the support of the medical profession,” he said.

Dr Meldrum then urged the consultants not to vote on the motion, insisting the BMA as an organisation “do politics but we cannot be doing personal politics”.

He also said, that despite press speculation, the Health Bill did have the support of the cabinet and prime minister, adding: “It’s a mistake to think that if you got rid of the secretary of state the bill would go.”

Dr Meldrum said he was against the bill and reminded delegates that he would voice his opposition to it at the [TUC rally](#) that evening.

But he added: “As for being nice to Mr Lansley, that’s nothing to do with this [motion]. I do have to work with him – it doesn’t help to have motions like this.”

The committee’s chair Mark Porter – widely seen as a potential successor to Dr Meldrum when his term of office in the BMA’s top job ends this summer – spoke to HSJ after the vote.

He said of the motion: “In the past we’ve declined to do this and the government has demonstrated it doesn’t listen.”

Dr Porter said “Hamish was making a pragmatic point” that the BMA needed to retain a working relationship with ministers on issues such as pensions.

But added: "Sometimes you have to recognise that the secretary of state is low in the stock of consultants."