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GPs: WE WILL BRING NHS TO A STANDSTILL

'Catastrophic' disruption could cut appointments by up to a half

By **Shaun Wooller** Health Editor

FAMILY doctors are threatening to slash the number of their daily appointments and bring the NHS to a 'standstill'.

The British Medical Association is urging GPs to back the disruption – the first in 60 years – in a ballot that closes at midday today.

Patient groups described the move as 'selfish' and warned that GPs risked harming those in need of care and losing the public's support. One NHS chief said a cap on appointments could be 'catastrophic'.

It is feared as many as three million GP appointments a month could disappear if all family doctors kowtow to the BMA demands to slash numbers to just 25 a day. Some currently do 50, while the average is 37.

The action would start as early as Thursday and last for 'months'.

The union says GP funding is being squeezed and the terms of a new NHS contract mean 'many surgeries will struggle to stay financially viable'. But GP partners, who own their

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