

2nd April, 2012

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees

PO Box 6100 , Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600 Australia

Re; The Health Insurance (Dental Services) Bill 2012 [No. 2]

As a participating provider in the Medicare Chronic Disease Dental Scheme since 2008, I have now treated approximately 1000 patients, the majority of whom have been bulk billed. I have no doubt that my treatment has saved and improved many of those patients lives.

Even though I have been a sole practitioner, I have had the luxury of a very efficient electronic patient management system as well as dedicated staff to support me and maintain records. The challenge has been knowing what records were required by Medicare because in my previous 20 years as a practitioner, record maintenance was very standard with minimal specific requirements.

When I started as a first time Medicare service provider in 2008, the only information supplied to me by Medicare was the green book entitled "*The Medicare Benefits Schedule Dental Services*" 2007. I have had no assistance interpreting rules, notifications or updates from Medicare regarding this book since 2008. Medicare has provided no other education or assistance as to what was required of me as a Medicare provider since receiving that book. I have also received no information regarding changes to fees which have happened on several occasions.

Fortunately my professional association, the Australian Dental Prosthetists Association, started an awareness campaign to members in 2011 when they were made aware of audits being undertaken by Medicare. As a result I undertook a self audit to ensure compliance, but to this day I have had no updates or communication from Medicare regarding the record keeping rules. I nevertheless believe that my records are totally compliant.

I respect and acknowledge that Medicare has a duty to monitor expenditure of public monies, but they also have a duty to train and educate their providers of their unique requirements. If there has been any breach of administrative compliance, Medicare must accept responsibility as their training for me as a dental prosthetist has been non existent.

If Medicare is to continue relying on practioners to deliver services on their behalf, it is imperative that they assume their responsibility for training those practitioners in the administrative requirements for record keeping rather than taking such draconian action as full repayment for services properly provided. More direct communication between Medicare and practitioners is essential to prevent this situation ever happening again.

Yours truly,



Graeme D Morris - Dental Prosthetist