

Mr Gilbert Runnalls

Senate Finance and Public  
Administration Committees  
PO Box 6100 Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

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To whom it may concern,

I am currently working in partnership with a Dental Prosthetist that is in the process of being audited by Medicare. I would like to point out to the committee what I see as the complete unfairness of the audit and the dire financial consequences this process has inflicted on me as well as the psychological and ultimately physical price I have incurred. The stress I am living with filters down to my wife and children as they can't fail to recognize the worry I have labored under for such a long period.

When the audit process first began I was concerned but not particularly so. I was confident that the business had at least provided the minimal points of compliance. As the process moved forward I became aware that Medicare seemed not so much to be acting for the welfare of patients but were rather just trying to recover funds for a scheme that had gone over budget.

What Medicare don't seem to consider is the hardships they place on the practitioners involved and their extended business associates or the stress placed on families of financial ruin. These huge decisions seem to be handled by low level public servants and concern very long term repercussions. In the case of our business there has been no suggestion of fraud or over servicing. As far as I know the vast majority of patients treated are more than happy with their outcomes. In the years that we have been working with the scheme, Medicare has never approached us to discuss any compliance issues. If we have been non compliant, it has been through ignorance rather than deceit. If Medicare placed such huge store in minor administrative issues, why have they never (until April last year) engaged our industry face to face.

Lying in bed in the wee hours of the morning, thinking about my current situation (as I do now), I was trying to think of an analogy that might apply to other businesses or professions. The nearest I came was to see it in terms of the Inquisition, both in terms of the poor evidentiary value of the investigation and the ultimate consequences both psychologically and financially.

I urge the committee members to recommend the good intent of the bill.

Faithfully,  
Gilbert Runnalls