

**Subject:** CDDS Scheme

Dear Sir/Madam,

Greetings, I Dr. Anil Kontham, practising at \_\_\_\_\_, is great full to the federal senate for giving me the opportunity to express concerns about the actions of Medicare under the CDDS scheme.

I have started participating in the CDDS Scheme to serve the patients, who cannot afford most of the basic Dental Care, and in most of the cases, poor oral health was affecting their general Health.

In my initial days with CDDS scheme ,there were no proper Guidelines or information available from Medicare all I could collect the information was by calling colleagues and Australian dental association , it was impossible to collect the information from Medicare over the phone as most of the operators ,who were dealing the phone calls were new to the CDDS and not aware of the Guidelines, only From April 2011 when Australian Dental association started sending the members information about the CDDS guidelines ,we came to know about the actual guidelines regarding the CDDS and the paper work involved.

I was involved with Medicare by treating the patients under teen dental programme and the CDDS, used to the get information for teen dental programme but never received any information regarding the CDDS. Was getting the information from ADA since 2011, where we were provided with proper guidelines .With CDDS most of my senior colleagues were also not aware of the Guidelines, it was very frustrating to treat the CDDS patients initially ,the payments were rejected numerous times stating paper work is not sufficient ,or patient is not eligible, even though patients presented with referral letter from his treating GP, only from past 1 year GP are aware of the actual guidelines about CDDS ,there are so many occasions where full treatment provided was rejected as patients were changing the Dentists in order to get double benefit under this scheme ,as there was no proper monitoring or guidelines to follow up patients previous treatment history, only from past 8 months the CDDS is computerised and when we call Medicare help line they are

in a position to inform us what is the status of patients eligibility, treatment provided .

I continued my services for this scheme as I knew the benefits it was giving to the community, especially to people who never ever thought that their oral health can be properly addressed.

The audits undertaken by Medicare is causing high stress in our profession as the paperwork requirements were not guided properly , only after April 2011, we are getting proper information from Medicare. The dental association was sending most of the information regarding the paperwork I request the Senate enquiry to look in to the guidelines and education provided by Medicare in 2009 and 2010 years , and to show some sympathetic approach towards the paperwork during Audits , most of my colleagues have stopped accepting CDDS patients due to fear of repayments and penalties from the Medicare Audits, whenever I hear about the stories where Dentists were forced to pay large sum of money to Medicare due to Audits ,I get stressed about the future as you are all aware under the CDDS , the fees paid by Medicare is very low and the lab fees , materials and costs of running the practice remains same and if we are forced to repay there is no option other than closing the practice as the financial loss is unthinkable and I cannot certainly afford to pay back. The family also gets affected with the stress we go through.

Thank you for providing the opportunity; if you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Dr. Anil Kontham