



4th April 2012

To whom it may concern,

My name is Elizabeth Gorman and I'm a Dental Assistant/Receptionist working in South Australia. I've been working at the same clinic for 3 ½ years. In that time I have seen how the EPC (Medicare Enhanced Primary Careplan) works to help change peoples lives and health within the area. The two dentists that I work with put in a lot of time, effort and long hours for those patients.

The problem with EPC's is that there are way too many rules to follow and more paperwork than the dentist can handle which takes them away from doing the job of helping our patients. It also affects the staff as they have to deal with excessive amounts of paperwork and with patients wondering why it takes so long to get an appointment. On average it was a six-week wait just for a check up to do a treatment plan, when most of our patients are in severe pain due to their medical conditions. As a requirement with our clinic, the receptionists would have to contact Medicare before every appointment and see that every EPC was in place and \$ amount remaining was all correct. Our dentists would try to work within the amount given (\$4250) throughout the treatment, but sometimes the information from Medicare was not always correct. Due to these errors the dentists have written thousands of dollars off and given free treatment to our patients, so that our patients are not out of pocket and they get the treatment required. Most of our patients are on some form of benefits from the government combined with many health issues which costs them already.

On the other hand, I find it disgusting that Medicare is chasing dentists for the money that they had done treatment for, just because 1 or 2 pieces of paperwork were not kept. For example: if a letter was sent to the GP that referred the EPC and they did not retain the copy of that letter, please tell me how that is the dentist's fault. I find that a bit harsh, as the dentist has done their side of the paperwork.

Overall I think that EPC's are good for those who are chronically ill which causes oral problems due to their medication. If you punish the dentists that put so much hard work into helping these people rather than doing unnecessary paperwork, a lot of the dentists will stop participating with EPC's which will cost the government more through dental hospitals and cause more issues for patients all through Australia.

Yours kindly,

Elizabeth Gorman