

16 April 12

Dear Senate Committee

I am writing in response to the senate inquiry into the Health Insurance (Dental Services) Bill 2012.

I am a general dental practitioner located in East Bentleigh, Victoria. I first participated in the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme in the late 2009. At first I was very reluctant to take part of the scheme as the information was very scarce. In the end, we became involved due to the high demand from our patients. We have rung the helpline from Medicare numerous times to seek clarification to the paperwork process, but we were given either unclear instruction or conflicting information from the helpline assistants. And in many occasions the helpline assistants did not know the answer themselves! It had taken our surgery many months of trial and error in order to begin to understand the working of the scheme.

Before I became involved with the Medicare scheme, our surgery had been providing dental care under the Department of Veteran Affairs Scheme, which, in my opinion, is a much easier scheme to understand and much better run program than the Medicare dental scheme. DVA helpline assistants are actually knowledgeable and helpful, things that the Medicare dental scheme should be.

Currently, we are subjected to random audits from the Medicare department. We know of some other colleagues who are also been subjected to the audits. I note that the Medicare department have yet send us any formal written instruction on how to submit the paperwork correctly. Medicare helpline staffs are still ill informed and continue to refer us to their online information site, which is very contradicting in their wording and difficult to understand.

I still believe the Medicare scheme is generally beneficial to the target population, and I believe numerous patients have been benefited from our surgery, regardless of the paperwork compliance demanded by the Medicare department. Currently, our surgery is still accepting patients on the good faith of the Medicare scheme vouchers, and we are happy to continue such practice in the foreseeable future. However, we will be forced to stop such practice should Medicare continue with their regime of harsh audit process.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. «First» «Last» (B.D.Sc.) Melb.