

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this submission as a dentist operating in a private clinic in . The clinic has provided dental services under the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme (CDDS) in past years, and I have recently decided to do the same. It is known that there is an increasingly high demand and pressure with regards to waiting lists in the public dental sector, and my decision has been borne from a desire to help provide for those in need of dental treatment in the area, who have been deemed eligible by their corresponding medical GP. These patients who are medically compromised and dentally affected, otherwise cannot afford dental treatment. I have spoken with other colleagues, and many of us provide dental services by bulk billing the patient; the fees under the CDDS scheme are considerably lower than the private fees set at my clinic, and part of this cost is absorbed by the clinic.

I understand the need for accurate administration and paperwork, and have made every effort possible to adhere to the guidelines required. Occasionally, I can understand if some paperwork is not completed to the standards stated, and this is usually due to an innocent oversight. Over the course of care, treatment plans can change, and as with all patients, private or otherwise, these are thoroughly discussed.

I haven't been audited by Medicare, but know of several colleagues who have been or are in the process of being audited. This is an immensely stressful, elongated process for those involved. I expressly disapprove of fraud, and indeed those who are guilty of it should be punished accordingly. However for the vast majority of health professionals who try to abide by the guidelines, the auditing process involved and reclamation of funds for past years is not only unreasonable but also excessive for what is usually an innocent oversight. The aggressive reclaiming of funds has huge potential to push those involved into bankruptcy.

It is my hope that a review of the current system be undertaken, and from this a more equitable and reasonable auditing and penalty system be implemented. Otherwise, those who provide fair treatment are unjustly and unreasonably punished.

Yours sincerely,

Drs Xing-Kai Wong and Judith Ong