

11th April 2012.

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

To whom this concerns,

I am a local family dentist in _____ who participates in the Medicare CDDS scheme and wish to support the Health Insurance (Dental Services) Bill 2012 [No.2].

My business partner and I opened a new dental surgery in August 2011 and upon commencement of business we both agreed that we would support and treat those on the CDDS scheme. I believed that supporting the scheme would encourage good will and create a working relationship with the local GPs to provide inclusive and comprehensive care of the patient as a whole and also impress the importance of dental treatment, maintenance and prevention onto our patients.

The auxiliary staff hired, while having previous dental assisting/reception experience had had no experience with the CDDS scheme prior to commencement of employment and it was during the first 2 months of business that the scheme was investigated and put into action. Reception staff has had to make all of their own enquiries and set up all of our systems to claim and process claims and payments. We have been able so far to keep track of all of our CDDS patients and the receptionist has ensured to the best of her ability that all paperwork has been completed.

As the principal dentist and employer, I am concerned to think that current legislation makes the health professional liable for any minor administrative oversights. While I have the utmost faith in the ability of my staff, I still find it disconcerting to think that an error in paperwork on their behalf, albeit unintentional, could mean that all of the quality dental treatment and advice I had provided would need to be repaid. I believe this action would discourage dentists to participate and have already heard of at least one dentist in the Coffs Harbour area who has now withdrawn his support and no longer treats CDDS entitled patients.

To date, we have provided treatment under the CDDS scheme, and feel as though the majority of our CDDS patients that comply with treatment have benefitted from treatment. This benefit has been noticed in our patient's self-esteem and confidence, as often patients have mentioned that they are happy to smile again. Two have even commenced new

Address



Contact



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employment after years of unemployment benefits. I believe there needs to be legislation to protect dentists who have provided good treatment, but have overlooked some aspects of the paperwork. It would adversely affect many people and families in the Coffs Harbour area should the CDDS scheme end. Many CDDS patients cannot afford dental treatment and see the plan as a blessing. We have a visiting Prosthodontist from Sydney and he is also happy to see our patients under the scheme so we have the added benefit of offering specialist advice and treatment to patients who present with challenging dentures, crowns and/or implants.

I am committed to providing quality dental treatment and believe that the CDDS scheme enables more people to regain and maintain their dental care. I participate in the scheme as I believe everyone deserves a stable oral environment and a calming and confident dental practice to achieve such.

Thank you for the opportunity to write to the Senate about Medicare CDDS audits.

Kind regards,

Dr Devendra Rao