

From: Dr Vincent K. Leung

4 April 2012

Senate Finance & Public Administration Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Committee

Re: The Senate Inquiry of the CDDS

I am writing as one of the dentists who has been taking part in the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme and who is being audited by Medicare.

Even though the auditing process is still ongoing I have not been contacted by Medicare so far, there are a couple of points that I would like to be presented during Inquiry.

Firstly, when I was subjected to the random audit, the cases being queries were all from the very beginning of the Scheme and nothing later than 2009.

I must admit most of the cases would fail the compliance test from that period. The reasons being that from the beginning, like the majority of dentists in the same situation, I was unaware of these requirements. I am now strictly complaint with the paperwork requirements because I am fully aware of them. If I were to be asked to repay all the money that I had received from Medicare through my professional expertise, honest labour and legitimate contribution to the need and wellbeing of my patients just because I made a small error or omission, namely not to carry out some paperwork, then I think the outcome is very harsh, excessive and unjust. To put it concisely – the punishment does not fit the crime.

Secondly, from my own observation, the purpose of the audit seems to concentrate mainly on the administrative aspect of the Scheme and not on the actual quality and quantity of dental treatment the dentist delivers. Surely, I think the most important aim of the Scheme is to deliver the best oral health care to the largest number of people at the bargain basement price, and these I believe I personally had helped to achieve. If the government insists on pursuing the return of the money the dentist has arduously and rightfully earned just because of some minor infarction then I think I am been denied the natural justice and been treated very unfairly and vindictively. Medicare is not focussing on whether the treatment was done, whether it was appropriate and whether the patient's outcome is good.

I realise we are living in the financially stringent times and it is the government's duty to keep the public expenditure in a wise and effective manner. On the other hand, the government is supposed to govern for all, to give a fair go to all sides. But in this instance, I think we the dentists as the providers are not getting the due considerations, recognition and sympathy that we deserve. If we have to pay two years of claimed benefits for work actually performed, the government has benefited from a service to the needy and made no contribution to the cost. This is wrong.

In conclusion I hope you will accept the mitigating circumstances, my realisation of the error that I made and put aside the matter of penalty and retribution just for this instance.

Yours faithfully

Dr Vincent Leung