

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the persecution of dentist who have failed to comply with administrative processes during their claim of chronic disease dental scheme (CDDS).

CDDS is a great initiative brought out by the government to help those patients in real need of dental treatment that would have worsened their chronic condition. Like any government initiative, the scheme is susceptible abuse and rorting by few individuals. Therefore monitoring and auditing dentist is required to prevent such abuse. I agree that the dentists that are caught cheating the system needs to be punished and repay claims that were never done in the first place.

When CDDS scheme was first introduced, there has been little information regarding the process needed to access this scheme. It is only after a couple years and through media coverage that dentists came to be aware of the requirement. Little or no information has been given to each dental practice that I know of (and I've worked in at least half a dozen different practices in the past few years).

For example, only this year did I receive a letter from Medicare outlining the treatment that can be performed in the initial consultation visit by a patient on CDDS. And I remember contacting Medicare a couple years ago to enquire about what can be performed in the initial visit. The answer I received from the Medicare phone line (132 150) operator was that he/she wasn't sure.

Comparing CDDS with the Medicare teen voucher plan, the teen voucher is very clear and straightforward on what can and needs to be done. Comparing CDDS with Vet Affair's Scheme, vet affair's is straight forward and there's never been any hassle in providing treatment and making a claim.

CDDS has been a great help to many patients and the dental treatment provided have subsequently improved their general health. However due to the hassle of Medicare processes and fear of persecution, I know of many dentists and practices have turned away patient's with CDDS referrals. While providing a treatment plan for the referring doctor and the patient may help to discourage fraud to a very limited extent, dentist shouldn't be punished if they fail to comply. Most doctors and patients would have little clue or wouldn't care less about a treatment plan as long as what's needed is done and the dentist fix their problem. The CDDS should be implemented in a way that it shouldn't add to the dentist and GP the burden of extra paper work and bureaucracy.

In summary, I believe dentist who knowingly rort the CDDS scheme should be punished while others who genuinely provided treatment for the patients of CDDS should not be punished for administrative processes' reasons.

Kind regards.

Dr Jimmy Yang