

Subject: Medicare CDDS audit

The Senate committee inquiry regarding Medicare CDDS audits,

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have been practicing Dentistry for 35 years ,one year in New Zealand, 3 years in Thailand and in Australia since 1980.

As a practicing dentist in different countries I have learnt different aspects of Dentistry as well as the Dental programs each government has for helping their citizens.

I was fortunate to be selected as the first dentist to work in the then modern newly opened in 1980.I found that there were not much help for the general public who cannot afford to pay for private dentists .We used to see anyone who turned up at the Dental School as we had more patients we started to see only with the Health care card holders as well as the ones who had been referred by the private dentists . I also worked in other public dental clinics for NSW Health Department before buying into a private dental practice.

In my practice I participate in all the governments (Federal and NSW) dental scheme since 1983.

As the new scheme (CDDS)comes up there is not a reason why I should not participate in this scheme.

There was not much informations given to me personally apart from the informations I got from the website. As far as I understand if a person is eligible for dental treatments , we have to ring up Medicare to check that the EPC program(CDDS program) is in placed for that person if it is in placed then we can start working on her/him.After each treatment we have to write the claim form stating what we have done for the patients by writing the item numbers representing the works that has been done.The patient signs the form as with the Veteran Affairs patients and NSW Government sponsored patients.

We had rung Medicare on several occasions to clarify certain things such as the patient has been referred to one particular dentist but want to be treated by another dentist, Medicare can also give different answers.We always make sure that we rang Medicare before commencing the treatment and thought that that was all needed .

Unfortunately I am one of the dentist who is being audited.I have been sent a lots of forms to fill in mainly to check that I had given the quotations to the patients before treatments or not.

My patients certainly benefit from the services I provided through this CDDS scheme.

There were not much informations about the scheme at the start of the scheme and probably most dentists like myself thought that it will be the same system like the other government sponsor scheme.

It seems unfair that all the dental treatments has been performed satisfactory for eligible persons as the dentists who did not give the quotation to the patients have to give the money back to Medicare plus what ever penalties the Medicare will impose upon. Medicare should have let us know the seriousness of not given the quotations to us at the beginning of the scheme. Are all the dentists who work with Medicare will be audited? Auditing process has given me stress and sleepless nights thinking what have I done wrong .If we did somethings wrong professionally it is of different maters all together.

I am sure the committee will find the fairness for the dentists who have been audited are being audited.

Yours faithfully,

Somchai.

11/4/2012

Dr Somchai Tongsumrith

Dental Surgery