

I have been made aware of the Health Insurance (Dental Services) Bill 2012 that was introduced into parliament with the aim of rectifying the unfair treatment of dental prosthetists and dentist audited as providers under the CDDS. A Senate enquiry has been launched and I would like to take the opportunity to express my opinion.

There are 3 main issues:

- **Medicare audits and administrative requirements**

This document is produced to explain the views of a practicing and licensed Dental Prosthetist (DP). It is written with reference to the practice pertaining to the provision of Dental services under Medicare in particular the provision of dentures under the Enhanced Primary Scheme available to patients who have been referred by a GP or a Dentist because of their chronic health condition. The scheme including DP services commenced late 2007. Following registration and provisioning of a provider number, The Australian Government, Department of Health and Ageing provided the DP with a booklet titled "Medicare Benefits Schedule Dental Services" 2007 and again 2010. This booklet does not reflect the seriousness of the act and the consequences of breaching the act. No copy of the legislation was provided with that document or any other time.

- **Medicare requirement that a patient must see a dentist**

DPs consult directly with patients including Private, Veterans' Affairs, Pensioners (**including patients with a chronic medical conditions who are NOT under medicare**). There is no legal requirement by the DP to obtain an Oral health assessment by a dentist prior to the provision of any such non medicare services. It is within the scope of practice by a DP to evaluate abnormalities.

A DP is expected to provide good care and upon the initial examination, evaluate any abnormality and refer to another dental practitioner (such as a dentist or oral surgeon) if necessary prior to commencement of denture construction.

This is clearly set out in the in the dental act and the code of conduct as set out by the dental Board of Australia. Why does medicare require that a patient must be seen by a dentist prior to receiving new partial dentures? I suggest if this rule did not exist the government could save considerable funding as much unnecessary referring to dentists would stop.

- **Medicare requirement that only a dentist can refer to a specialist**

As previously mentioned it is within the scope of normal practice to refer patients to i.e. an Oral Surgeon following detection of certain clinical conditions. It is wrong for medicare rules to prohibit a DP from practicing their right and responsibility to refer directly to a specialist. Again if this rule did not exist the government could save considerable funding as much unnecessary referring to dentists would stop.

I am available to discuss any of the above matters should the need arise.

Kind regards
Paul Werner