

Dr Sigal Jacobson

4<sup>th</sup> April 2012

**Attention: Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees**  
**PO Box 6100**  
**Parliament House**  
**Canberra ACT 2600**

Dear Chairman / Senate Committee

**Re: Chronic Disease Dental Scheme (CDDS)**

I wish to submit and express my concern in regards to the Medicare Auditing.

I am an owner of a successful Melbourne dental clinic that has been established for over 40 years.

I am a good, honest community minded dental health practitioner and have provided dental services under the chronic disease dental scheme from the time it was released. I have provided dental treatments under this Scheme in good faith and achieved good clinical outcomes and satisfied patients.

I have been selected in the Medicare audits and this resulted in many stressful hours spending time preparing all the documents as requested.

We are a private practice and lowered our standard fees for Medicare patients. Due to our good will and good faith we even bulk billed so that the patients would not be out of pocket.

I would like to emphasize that Medicare did not provide sufficient information to me about this scheme nor did they provide sufficient information to the practice and staff members. I had not been exposed to other schemes funded by Medicare prior to participating in this scheme. This scheme was introduced to us without any prior warning. My practice was not prepared staff wise, computer wise nor time wise to deal with the excessive paperwork and we had to make many adjustments without any guidance from Medicare.

Some of my patients were contacted directly by Medicare which resulted in them feeling very anxious. They also found it to be threatening, intimidating and even embarrassing. They thought they were accused of doing something wrong and that our clinic was involved in a fraud. This resulted in me feeling very embarrassed and uncomfortable in front of my patients.

We have been working for many years with claims for Department of Veterans Affairs and have found this to be a simple and successful method by processing and submitting Dental Report Vouchers. It seems to be a far more dignified approach than the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme.

It appears that Medicare is looking for any faults in paperwork submissions and transactions, then demanding that dentist make payments to Medicare. Some of my dental colleagues were asked to pay substantial amounts to Medicare. This resulted in them having to declare bankruptcy and even having to close their practice. If this was to happen to my practice it would result in, not only the closing of a business but also the termination 5 loyal staff members who have worked with me for many years. They all have families and commitments and then there is the community I serve.

My experience to date with the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme under Medicare is not a very good one. I would prefer not to participate in any future Medicare schemes.

Regards

Dr Sigal Jacobson