

Dr Philip Treggeagle

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees.
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I write to you as a concerned Dental Practitioner.
My name is Dr Philip Treggeagle. My surgery address is
. I have worked for 25 years as a Dentist.

I am a private associated dental practitioner in a group practice. My practice provides dental care to the community. It caters for all ages from two to one hundred years old. It is not prejudiced by race, religion or sex. I treat everybody the one and the same.

With the introduction of the Chronic Diseases Scheme a number of my patients have become eligible for this scheme under the guidelines. In many cases it was a continuation of their dental health care.

I believe that the scheme has been running from 2007 and since that time I have been advising my patients numerous times that the scheme is to be shut down.

Since the introduction of the Scheme I have been given no advice or training on how to correctly implement the Scheme. And at no time have I been approached by Medicare Australia advising on correct billing practices or received educational material pertaining to this matter. The only relevant education I have ever received in November 2011 by the ADA and Meridian Lawyers was by Podcast 4 years later.

All services that I have provided for the benefit of my patients under the Scheme have been implemented to the highest standard that I can achieve.

If there have been non - compliance issues with this scheme I believe this was mainly the fault in the implementation of the Scheme. It reflects a lack of understanding for the provision of dental care.

A few salient points should be made.

1) Patients come into the surgery with their new Scheme paper work from their GP. For me the patient may be in pain, discomfort or just coming in for continued care.

Most Dentists and patients are frustrated with the restrictions in the Scheme in relation to the first appointment. They see it as a waste of their appointment time and their dental needs not been met at all. However the scheme expects me to provide only a proper oral examination on a first appointment and develop a dental plan without firstly cleaning away years and years of plaque, tartar, staining and other associated debris. It also expects me to do nothing on a first appointment to relieve a patient in pain, broken denture/tooth but instead do paperwork - design a treatment plan, costing, then send it to a GP.

2) The Scheme has billing buffers in place. These involve the restriction on the payment in the provision of dentures over an eight year period. Thus I ask Medicare Australia why would it not block payments outside of those restricted items on the first appointment. Seems logical to me.

When a patient enters my surgery with the appropriate paper work from the GP namely a photocopy of the required form. Where is the appropriate paperwork for the Dental Practitioner to send back to the GP?

As it stands I believe the Scheme has been exceedingly beneficial for the provision of my services to those patients who have been eligible under the Scheme. It has achieved dental health and this has contributed to the overall well being of many individuals in combination with other allied health care professionals.

I will continue to provide dental care to these patients who are eligible under the guidelines of this scheme. I believe it is a good scheme that requires some fine-tuning.

I expect these issues will be more eloquently stated by my esteemed colleagues.

Yours respectfully,

Philip Treggeagle