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Dental Services (Perth)

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Eric Gray, Primary Care Division,
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Dear Mr Gray,

Re Modernising N.H.S. Dental Services in Scotland.

I cannot understand why such an important consultative document was not circulated to EVERY dentist. I work in a practice with one principal and three associates. One copy came to the practice and it was only by pure chance that I heard about it.

Revolution is in the air. In fact there are only two options for the payment of dental care, item of service or capitation.

A basic fact must be borne in mind, it is well established that dental output is a quarter under capitation than item of service and you have a severe shortage of dental manpower.

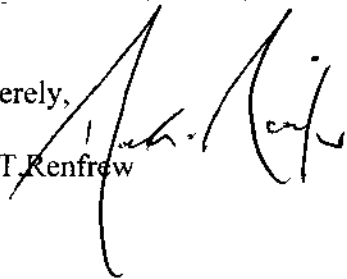
What has gone wrong under the present item of service is that it is underpaid. Over the last twenty or so years there have been annual sub-inflation increases while all the time we have been asked to do higher standards of care such as sterilisation, control of cross infection and clinical governance. I estimate that fees are at least 50% of what is required to give excellent care and fund innovation and higher standards - i.e. what the public expects.

Most capitation schemes start at £10 per month. The public will not pay this so the end result will be a severe decline in dental health. Low income families outside the benefit system will not be able to afford a capitation system and will only be able to afford emergency treatment.

The majority of patients would find the present dental fee scale X 2 a better bargain than an expensive capitation system which will of course require its own expensive bureaucracy.

Yours sincerely,

Norman T. Renfrew

 14/12/03