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Dear Sir/Madame,

To resolve the present crisis in the Scottish General Dental Service, the Scottish Assembly will require to grasp the thorny solution of greatly increased resourcing. The restricted resourcing of the last 25 years, considered a virtue by the Assembly's political predecessors, brings us to the present extremely unsatisfactory position. No information source on the subject will contradict the analysis that the present Scottish General Dental Service is funded by a fee scale that is derisory, comparing unfavourably with the per item costs of the services of the average Scottish tradesman, and not remotely appropriate for a proficient, modern, health care service. Thus the large numbers of NHS dentists pressured into seeking financial refuge in private service fees. Thus also the large numbers of young dentists, whose excellent professionalism, the product of our highly resourced education system, is welcomed, with open arms, as a free end product, by countries such as Australia, to which they emigrate to escape the iniquitous Scottish fee provision.

Having provided the vastly increased resources, it is of paramount importance that a new system of remuneration financially rewards NHS Dental Practice owners at a significantly higher level than their non-practice owning assistant/associate colleagues. With their lifelong commitment to care, NHS practice owners are recognisable as the true backbone of the service, now and in the future. Yet it is they who have borne by far the financial burden of the year on year restriction of resources. Thus, universal unwillingness of assistant/associate dentists to commit in to the financially disadvantaged state of practice ownership. Thus, also the large numbers of NHS practices in Scotland which close, through lack of purchasers, this precious asset being lost to the communities they served, and the Assembly at great cost, resourcing alternative provision.

The solution to all of the above is simple. Resource a Dental Service at a level that matches existing private alternatives and is therefore attractive enough to Dentists that they will work within it, or preside over the imminent complete demise of the first core National Health Service Care provision to be lost to the Scottish people since Clement Atlee constituted National Health care after the Second World War.

Yours sincerely

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