



Australian Government  

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Department of Health and Ageing

Dear

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 March 2010 to the then Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP concerning the Medicare Chronic Disease Dental Scheme (CDDS). This matter falls within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP. The Minister has asked me to reply on her behalf.

The Australian Government is committed to expanding access to dental care in Australia. The Government's planned reforms included introducing the Medicare Teen Dental Plan and the Commonwealth Dental Health Program.

The Medicare Teen Dental Plan was implemented on 1 July 2008 and has provided \$125 million in benefits for eligible teenagers to receive 854,336 preventive dental checks.

Under the Commonwealth Dental Health Program, the Government has been intending to provide \$290 million to State and Territory governments to fund around one million additional public dental services, including priority treatment for people who have chronic conditions relating to their oral health. Public dental services are available to Pensioner Concession Card and Health Care Card holders.

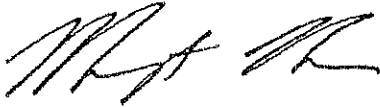
The Government shares your concerns about the operation of the previous government's CDDS. This is why the Government has signalled its intention to close the CDDS in order to make funding available for the introduction of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program. While the Government recognises that people have received assistance under the CDDS, it has not been targeted to patients most in financial need, and has been complex for patients to access. However, the Senate has prevented closure of the scheme. This means that the Government has not to date been able to implement the Commonwealth Dental Health Program.

In the 2009-10 Budget the Government also committed to investing a further \$11 million over four years in additional dental services for Indigenous Australians in rural and regional areas.

The Government is continuing to explore policy options in an effort to improve access to dental treatment services for all Australians.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with the Australian Government. I trust the above information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Margaret Noris  
A/g Assistant Secretary  
Hospital Development, Indemnity and Dental Branch

12 July 2010