



Bite

Word of mouth

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Featured

Are health funds worth it?

There have been massive changes to health insurance. Recently the Government removed tax payer funding and the second largest Australian fund was sold to a UK fund. The question we are being asked is "with the 30% increase in cost will they actually be worth it?"

Would you let an Accountant direct your health care?

Health funds seem like a good idea—when you get sick you get money back for seeking appropriate medical care. Preventive measures, such as going to a chiropractor or a dentist, also carry a financial incentive. What could be better? At first glance taking proper care of yourself comes with a financial gain!

A detailed look shows that you may not get as good a deal as it sounds.

Health funds offer you a rebate for your care based not on what you need, but on what is most cost-effective for them. As they often are a private business their main concern is to maximise their profits for the benefit of their shareholders. The way they do this is to have a difference between

the rebates paid to each member compared to the premiums received. This difference can add up where some funds have enough money left over to sponsor the Australian Tennis Open and Summer Test Cricket Series—how that helps you see a *healthier you* is a bit of a mystery.

According to a statement by Australian Dental Association, "Health Funds set their rebates at a level that suits their commercial needs. Those rebates are not related to any recognised fee scale or cost of care."

Since rebates tend to drive the type of care that is sought and given, it's actually the Accountants that end up directing the type of care you receive, how often you are allowed to access it and sometimes even who you can access it from. These accountants don't know teeth, and they certainly don't know you.



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This month...

We're often asked about the value of belonging to a health fund, so this month our feature article explores this. Also, we highlight mouthguards and a staff update.

With Easter approaching it means only one thing—a chance to give out a ridiculous amount of chocolate in a blatant effort to drum up business!! Appointments between 1st March and Good Friday go in the draw to win our fantastic Easter hamper from Candy Bouquet.

I hope there's been enough time for Chris and his kids to finish up his win from last year! Good luck

Dr Simon Franks



> continued

But You Save on Tax!!

With the current Medicare rebate the price of basic health insurance can often be the same as what you save in tax. Private health insurers are posting massive profits (average of \$1b in 2009-2010) but with the other hand claiming a payout from the Government to keep them solvent. This is really what the Government is crying foul over—and in a way rightly so. The argument is that this tax revenue would be better off making the public health system stronger, more efficient and accessible for every Australian. Not just those with insurance.

Ok, so they make money off me, but what if I get sick?

Well if your name is Clive Palmer a single knee replacement at \$15,000 is just spare change. But the majority of us get a little concerned over this figure. The maximum amount paid out by Medibank Private last year was almost \$500,000 for a premature baby that required a lot of care. That's more than the average house price in Brisbane. So for hospital care some would argue it's a very good investment.



But what about extras cover?

The ACCC reported that the average rebate for extras dropped from 54% to 48% last year while premiums increased by 8%. This is where health funds don't add up. The extra cover received for the premiums outlaid in most policies leave you short changed. Add to this regulations like 'only one visit per year' and you're better off not having extras insurance in the first place.

Most Australians spend around \$1000 per year on health—glasses, couple of dental, chiropractic or physio appointments. Add to this the \$1500 you pay for extras insurance so you can claim 'something towards this cost' and 'extras' health care really does become expensive—even before the 30% increase in fees.

So what can I do?

Every family is different so get some advice. Ask your Accountant if tax savings are still available for you. Also contact a broker to discuss your cover and if it suits your needs. Ask yourself—do I get value for money from this policy and does it cover my health needs.

Bite staff

Welcome and goodbye

We would like to introduce Cassandra who has recently joined us. Bringing with her over five years of nursing experience and Cert. III in dental assisting we are lucky to have her as part of our team.



Congratulations to Jade who landed a fantastic job in the big corporate world. We already miss her but wish her very best with this opportunity and no doubt will see her for lunches (and also to watch Ellen in the staff room).

Casey has taken the next big step in her career with a move up to practice management in another clinic. After four years of working alongside Casey it's going to be a bit strange without her telling us what to do! Thanks for all your hard work Casey—will miss you.

Celebrate everyday heros. Let us know if you have a cause you'd like us to shout about.

Handy hint

Mouthguards



It's the time of year again when contact sports dominate prime time TV. If you know a player, make sure they wear a mouthguard. It should cover not only the teeth themselves but also the gum and bone holding them in place right up to the highest point that your tongue can reach inside your cheek. This ensures that the whole tooth including its root is protected. Most 'boil and bite' guards brought over the counter from chemists and sports shops don't reach up this far and are uncomfortable because they rely on bulk rather than fit. Ask us for more info on properly fitted mouthguards. ”

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Appointments between 1 March and Good Friday go in the draw to win our fantastic Easter hamper from Candy Bouquet. **BOOK NOW**



Visit the Bite Dental website to receive our email newsletter which includes regular health tips plus exclusive savings and offers from Bite Dental and our community.

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