

DENTAL PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION

NEWS RELEASE 31st March 2009 ~ Embargoed until 10:00am

NHS Dentists Gnash Teeth at Further Pay Cut

The national leaders of the UK's general dental practitioners described as 'derisory' the 0.21 per cent increase in earnings awarded by the government following today's recommendation of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Pay. The Retail Prices Index is currently at 3.2 per cent—anything less than this is effectively a pay cut.

Chairman of the DPA Jim Donaldson BDS said "The DDRB seems to assume no responsibility for difficulties in NHS access. Year after year we have tried to explain to them that dentists are motivated to either join or leave the NHS based on comparison with similarly skilled groups and also the disparity in terms and conditions between the public and private sectors. Pay is a vital element of the NHS package, yet year after year it is cut in real terms.

"The new contract is sufficiently unattractive and uncertain without this further clear signal that financial penalties are to be imposed year after year by below-inflation awards".

President of the DPA Brian Levy BDS said "With the RPI at 3.2 per cent, this recommendation can only be viewed by NHS dentists as another pay cut. This will further reduce our members' ability to accept and treat NHS patients".

Chief Executive Officer of the DPA, Derek Watson BDS said "The Review Body is hopelessly confused about how to set wages to retain dentists in the NHS. Four years ago they used the doctors' increase. Three years ago they used the Average Earnings Index. Then they used the Hospital and Community Health Services sector where dentists are salaried and have their expenses fully reimbursed. This year they have undercut even that award. No wonder high street dentists are choosing to do less NHS work!

"Dentistry is a good example of a service that was provided efficiently on behalf of the NHS in the private sector and since being 'nationalised' has gone from bad to worse. The government has broken its promise to provide a comprehensive dental service to the nation in return for the high levels of tax and national insurance paid.

"Dentists donate their premises, staff, equipment and materials to the NHS. Those who wish to take on more NHS patients are running into PCT funding constraints and their wages are decreasing in real terms. The April 2006 contract, which has been widely criticised by the House of Commons, patient groups and dentists associations, has brought about funding crises, waiting lists and postcode lotteries".

Notes for Editors

The job of commissioning dentistry was given to Primary Care Trusts in April 2006 but the Review Body makes a recommendation for dentists' earnings, usually through a recommendation on fees. The DPA says the current system is inefficient, inflexible and unfair. Since April 2006 funding has been cash-limited on a like-for-like basis, limiting the number of new dentists that can be recruited into each PCT area.

Most dentists are self-employed subcontractors to the NHS. They are free to do as much or as little NHS work as they like leaving them free to move to the private sector if the difference in terms and conditions between the two sectors becomes too large. The Dental Practitioners Association represents general dental practitioners in the UK.

Contact Information / News Release Archive

Dental Practitioners' Association
61 Harley Street
LONDON W1G 8QU

T: 0207 636 1072

F: 0207 636 1086 (by arrangement)

M: 07983 717 223 (24h)

E: info@UK-Dentistry.org

W: www.UK-Dentistry.org

Archive <http://www.uk-dentistry.org/downloads.php>

Pictures http://uk-dentistry.org/images/Council_05-08/