

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **FRAUD RISK TO HYGIENISTS AND DENTAL THERAPISTS.**

Hygienists and dental therapists risk falling foul of fraud laws unless they familiarise themselves with NHS regulations on making claims.

The UK-wide dental defence organisation MDDUS warns that just because dentists are responsible for submitting NHS claims, hygienists and therapists can also be held accountable if they knowingly profit from fraudulent claims for payment. Ignorance of the regulations concerning NHS treatment is not an adequate defence.

If hygienists and dental therapists are aware that irregular claims are being made or patients are being charged in excess of allowable NHS fees, they run the risk of being charged with fraud.

Self employed hygienists and therapists often work on a percentage of the fees that have been charged to patients. If those fees have been earned by a dentist adding on "extras" to the NHS fees for scalings - and the dental practitioner profits from the greater fee - then they could be considered to be profiting from the dentist's act of fraud.

MDDUS points out that hygienists and therapists, as registered professionals, must maintain their trustworthiness as defined by the General Dental Council - or run the risk of finding themselves not just in a criminal court but losing their livelihood and professional reputation at the GDC.

Rachael Bell, dental adviser, warns: "Hygienists and therapists need to familiarise themselves with the regulations. Where claims are being made that are not in line with those regulations they need to refuse to charge the patients or refuse to profit from those fraudulent claims.

"We have had a number of calls from hygienists and therapists who are now involved with counter fraud services or the GDC."

Bell adds: "If you are a hygienist or dental therapist you must get up to speed with the regulations in order to protect yourself and comply with your responsibilities as a GDC registrant.

"Ultimately this boils down to what sort of practice you want to work in. Remember your duty is to protect patients' interests and that of the profession before your own.

"If your practice is involved in surcharging NHS patients, or adding "extra NHS codes" to claims, then perhaps it is time to relocate."

## **Ends**

For further information contact Colin Calder on 0141 616 2677 or 07850 510881.

## **Note to editors**

MDDUS (The Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland) is a medical and dental defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medico- and dento-legal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK.

For further information on MDDUS go to [www.mddus.com](http://www.mddus.com).