Government only one to profit from higher NHS charges

By DTI

LONDON, UK: The government is expected to gain tens of millions of pounds from recent practices owing to recent increases in charges, the British Dental Association (BDA) has said. According to a recent analysis by the organisation, the Ministry of Health are to collect an estimated £40 million in profit by the time of the next general election in 2022 from NHS-funded treatment.

The BDA said that the latest hikes have reached levels that now exceed the price dentists are paid to provide services. "These hikes don’t go to dentists, aren’t supporting needed investment or improving access. They are becoming a nice little earner for ministers, which actively discourage the patients who most need our care," Overgaard-Nielsen said.

Since the start of April, charges for all types of dental care services have increased by an average of 5 per cent for the new fiscal year. Fees for Band 1 treatments have risen from £20.60 to £21.60, while Band 2 treatments have seen a hike from £244.30 to £256.50 instead of previously £244.30.

According to the government, the latest adjustment in treatment fees is estimated to provide additional funds of more than £72 million over the next year.

However, while charges have been rising at an inflation-busting pace, the BDA said, payments to dentists to provide services have increased by an average of just 1 per cent per year since 2010.

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"When patients put in more towards their care than government pays to provide it, NHS charges cease to be a ‘fair contribution’ and become a bad joke,” said Chair of the BDA’s General Dental Practice Committee Dr Henrik Overgaard-Nielsen. “This absurd situation has been fuelled by inflation-busting increases, and flattering budgets.”

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