BDA fights the good fight

Dentists up and down the country are eagerly waiting to see if the High Court is going to rule in favour of an appeal by the Department of Health, that gives health bosses the right to terminate dental contracts without cause or notice.

The BDA has challenged the legal appeal saying such notice clauses are unlawful and unreasonable.

The judge has retired to make his decision. We have no idea yet as to when this is going to be.

If the DH wins the appeal, PCTs would have the power to end dentists’ contracts with as little as one day’s notice.

Every right-minded person can see that this is totally unreasonable and would destroy the viability of family dental practices.

How can dentists plan for the future if they have no security? A success for the Department of Health would be bad for dentists, bad for patients and disastrous for the health of the nation.

A reversal of the original High Court judgment will apply to all personal dental service agreements and will leave dentists in a very vulnerable position.

‘Botched’ reforms fail 1.2m people

More than 1.2m fewer people saw an NHS dentist in the two years up to June this year than in the last two years under the old dental contract, according to figures from the NHS Information Centre.

However the data also shows that NHS dentists are carrying out more treatments for the patient they do see, with a rise of 1.4 per cent reported by the Information Centre.

The report, NHS Dental Statistics for England: Quarter 1, 2008, shows that in the two years up to the end of June 2008, 28.6m people - which equates to 52.7 per cent of the population, saw an NHS dentist.

The percentage of people seen by an NHS dentist varied from area to area with a higher percentage of people tending to see an NHS dentist in northern strategic health authority (SHA) areas compared with those in the south of England.

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