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Dear (Patient's Name),

Over the past few years I have struggled with concerns about Washington Dental Service. Since your employer has a WDS plan, I want to share with you some of the ethical dilemmas I have been experiencing. I suspect some of these will come as a surprise to you because WDS does not tell its customers how it operates. As a participating dentist, I am required to abide by very specific restrictions they impose on both you and me. Those restrictions have a direct impact on not only the services I can offer you, but also in the way you and I interact about your health and your dentistry.

During my dental career, the basic principles of dental care that I was taught in dental school have formed the foundation of my dental practice. These principles also form the foundation of what is required to become licensed to practice dentistry in our state and represent the *minimal* standard of care throughout the United States and Canada. To put it bluntly, the WDS guidelines would have me abandon some of these principles for no reason other than to reduce costs they incur and sell more policies. Let me underscore that the guidelines to which I refer do *nothing* to protect you or increase the quality of care you receive in either my practice or any other WDS practice.

WDS also has adopted a policy of declaring as "unnecessary" many procedures which also fit well within that minimum standard of care and for which there are mountains of supporting clinical research. Many of these procedures are those which last longer and consist of materials that are more biocompatible and less likely to contribute to additional problems. As you know, I have made a commitment to you that your care will be health enhancing, and as long-lasting as possible, involving the fullest range of choice available in modern dentistry. Because of the conflict between my commitment to you and your care and the cost-cutting methods of WDS, I can no longer lend my name to the program. For these reasons, I have chosen to discontinue my contractual relationship with WDS effective ___(date)___.

Why have I not done this before? I have two reasons. One, these restrictions have come about gradually, and it has only been in the last few years that the full implications of their strategy have become apparent. Two, I have been concerned that you would not be willing to

our commitment
is to
YOUR success

pay the few extra dollars that will be necessary to stay in my practice when I am no longer a WDS provider. I have always been extremely sensitive to the financial concerns of each of my patients. I understand how difficult it is to manage any cost increase, and I have wanted to avoid that. I am hoping, however, that you feel so well-served by our practice and this honest communication, that the subsequent change in procedure will not cause you to shift to another WDS participating dentist. There are implications for you, and I believe they are minimal.

- Under your WDS policy, you may continue to come to my practice; you will not be required to change to another dentist.
- We will continue to submit your claims as we have done in the past.
- You will be free to select the treatment that best fits your wants and values without anyone limiting your selections.
- You will receive reimbursement from WDS for the treatment you select, although the percentage of the fee you receive in reimbursement may be somewhat lower. How much lower is dependent on the policy that your employer purchased. The checks will be mailed directly to you.
- We will ask you to come prepared to handle your account at each visit. You will always know the fee well in advance and we will support you in planning how your treatment will be scheduled so that it remains affordable for you.

I hope we have been able to help you see how hard we have struggled with these questions. We value you as a patient and sincerely hope that you will continue to choose our office for your dental care. You can continue to have every confidence that the choices will be yours alone and that your care will not be compromised for any reason.

You may have questions for us, and we invite your call. Any of my team members or I would be pleased to discuss this with you. Although we have wanted to speak to everyone personally, we chose to also send this letter so that you could reflect on these thoughts and about the date we will end our tie with WDS. I look forward to continuing to serve you for many years in a healthy relationship. My best wishes to you and your family.

Sincerely,