



## Letters to Hobbit about Bill Itemisation

Dear Hobbit,

I am already complying with the new regulatory guidelines of bill itemisation and I have run into serious problems. A female patient of mine was very upset when I itemised her bill. She came to me for some problems “down there” and I prescribed a couple of vaginal pessaries.

Her employer used to pay me for the services and medicines consumed by their staff without any itemisation. I now itemise the medicines consumed by their staff. She is upset because the other day, she met her Human Resource colleague who asked her about her medical condition and even introduced a new kind of douche to her. Obviously the colleague learned about her condition from the itemised bill. She is suitably embarrassed and angry by this incident. What can I do? Instead of putting vaginal pessaries, can I just put something more complex sounding like “per introitus medicament”?

Dr Bai Dai  
Charlie Charlie Bravo Clinic  
Lorong 16, Geylang

Dear Halfling,

I just had an earful from an irate executive of Managed Care Company. He was complaining that I had breached my confidentiality clause by giving my patient an itemised bill which clearly stated that the patient paid \$2 while the Managed Care Company paid only \$5 for my consultation fees. The patient/employee is a unionist who is now taking up the case for the shoddy services workers have been receiving from company panel doctors. They are saying that they have been receiving inadequate care because doctors are only paid \$7 for consultation (\$5 plus \$2) when even polyclinics need to charge \$8 to \$9 for consultation after heavy subsidies from the government. I just follow law *betul*? And yet they are threatening to sue me! *Apa ini?????*

Dr Mas Alamak  
Whitley Family Clinic  
(Note: I have relocated my practice from Whitley Road recently. Please watch out for my professional notice in SMA News.)



To the Short One

I am upset. Because of this bill itemisation business, now every father-mother-son knows how little *lim peh* pay these desperate GPs for seeing my Beyond Infinity Managed Care Plan enrollees who co-pay (See *SMA News* January 2008 issue). I can get around this by killing off all my co-pay plans and convert to non-co-pay plans. But I have to wait till current contracts expire so in the meantime, what can I do to contain this PR crisis?

Don Koh Li Onn  
 Managing Director  
 Beyond Infinity Managed Care Plan Pte Ltd  
 and  
 Dragon Head  
 369 Society Holdings (British Virgin Islands)

Dear Hobbit,

Last month I received an itemised bill from my GP. It states that Consultation is \$15 while medicines cost \$36 for my usual chronic disease check-up. This month I received an itemised bill which showed that consultation is still \$15. But the same four drug items now cost \$39.95, \$3.95 more. I said how come I have to pay more now. My GP explained that with bill itemisation, everything got so complex that he had to computerise the drug prices in his computer database so that itemised bills can be automatically computed and printed out by the computer. Unfortunately, this led to the bill automatically becoming higher because the computer does not round-down. I asked him: "Can I have a non-itemised bill at the old prices?" He laughed but was kind enough to give me a discount of \$3.95. Now I feel every funny. I am supposed to feel grateful to my GP for giving me a discount that I never needed if only he did not have to itemise his bill. Funny *eh?*

Mr Kam Siah  
 c/o LPPL Pte Ltd  
 Per Nihilus Complex  
 Jalan Liak Boh Kew

And the Letter of the Month Prize goes to Dr See for writing the following letter! Mr See will get a three days two nights stay at Mt Doom Resort and receive complementary volcanic mud spa treatment. Mt Doom volcanic mud is reputed to have special healing properties that can render the most cynical mind completely compliant with stupidity devoid of reason.

Dear Ring-Bearer,

I am an old GP who cannot stand computers and as you know, this bill itemisation business requires computerisation to work. I only want to work for a few more years before I close shop so I do not want to invest in all this IT hardware and software stuff. To meet the new bill itemisation requirements, I now charge my patients ONLY consultation and waive all medicine charges. For example, if a patient comes to me for flu, I now charge him \$50 for consultation and waive all my charges for medicines. The bill looks like this:

Consultation:	\$50
Medicines:	Completely waived
Total:	\$50

Of course, I still keep good dispensing records in my dispensing books and patient cards. Like that can or not *ah?* Is there any regulation that prohibits from doing so?

Dr See Beh Kiang  
 MBBS (Honours)  
 Cerebral Volvulus Clinic  
 888 Ziam Road