A Christmas Carol
With Apologies to Charles Dickens (and anyone else who feels they deserve an apology)

‘Twas the night before Christmas, with peace in the house,
    Nobody stirred, not even a mouse.
The GPs had left for the UK or Perth,
    Their piece of the pie now shrunken of worth.

Preventive, Promotive Planned healthcare and such,
    The fees that we charged were not very much,
    But the value we gave was 100 percent,
    The care for our patients, indeed “HEAVEN SENT”.

So why can a “DSP” doctor not bill,
    A balance to patient, who was really so ill?
    “Oh No” said the funders and unions alike,
    Our clients need money for their new HARLEY BIKE!

With Insight and IPAF and REPI anew,
    The latest ideas all contain: “Peer review!”
    If only we now, could just all Standardise
    The measurement outcomes, it would just be so wise!

‘Cos GPs are gatfol, and filled with dismay,
    6 stars from the one group, and in the same day……
    Just One star for performing the very same task…
    “How can this all happen?” they often will ask.

Antibiotics don’t work anymore …. We’re in trouble
    With Tonsil and Transplants, the hospitals double
    Their Theatre and Ward fees, the bills now so fat
    The Funders will pay up, no doubt about that!

The Funders performing the best of the bunch…
    Grow fat and lazy from Executive’s lunch
    Are waiting and pondering the “Paper so White”
    They’re hoping the Ministers draft will be right!
    If not, well no worries, for the last 14 years ,
    We’ve muddled along and laughed through our tears!

And how will we pay for NHI so grand?
    That will gobble and swallow what’s left of our Rand?
    “We’ll increase the VAT, till they all writhe in pain!
    Protecting at all costs the long gravy train!”
The drugs now are outpriced—15 to the dollar
  “We’ll import from China”…
  “ALL fakes”, you may holler!
“But as long as they look good”, the pharmacist cries
The fact that they don’t work… you may well surmise
They’ll end up right back in your own waiting room….
   Just see them again, your income will boom!

Funders send them to Shoprite and Diskem and Clicks
   To get all their chronics, for just two and six!
And whilst in the checkout buying chips and a Coke
They collect a Glucometer, some chocks and a smoke!

   Far better to send them to their GPs who,
   Are well trained in primary care (but you knew!)
   Asthmatics, Diabetics, Hypertensives and all
   Belong in OUR stable, you may just recall!

But maybe by this time next year, the Commission
Would have sorted the mess and restored Competition
   To a sector so fraught with bad Regulation,
   How can we attend to the health of our Nation?

   So till January 1, I’ll bid you Adieu
   Enjoy your short break and come back anew
   Refreshed and restored and just ready to say
   “The year will be great”, (at least until May)!!
   HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!
From Tony Behrman, the teams at IPAF and Qualicare