

Policy Statement 2.7.1 – Delivery of Oral Health Care: Facilities: Community Dental Clinics and Dental Hospitals

Position Summary

Community dental clinics and dental hospitals play an integral role in the provision of health care to an eligible population. They should also collaborate with hospital dental units and private dental units to provide timely and appropriate care to patients and contribute to the education of all the dental team.

1. Background

- 1.1. Community dental clinics and dental hospitals have played a role in the delivery of dental services such as after-hours emergency services and comprehensive oral health care to persons eligible for public oral health care in Australia for nearly a century.
- 1.2. Some have also become providers of services by specialists and contribute to the education of dentists and allied dental personnel.
- 1.3. Changing population demographics and attitudes increase the demand for dental services provided by community dental clinics and dental hospitals.

Definitions

- 1.4. COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINIC is a publicly funded dental facility providing at least emergency and general dental services.
- 1.5. A DENTIST is an appropriately qualified dental practitioner, registered by the Board to practise all areas of dentistry.
- 1.6. A SPECIALIST DENTIST or SPECIALIST is one who practises a recognised speciality, possesses a higher qualification relevant to this area of dentistry, and has been so registered.
- 1.7. DENTAL HOSPITAL is a publicly funded health facility providing comprehensive oral health services.
- 1.8. ALLIED DENTAL PERSONNEL are those, other than dentists, working in the provision of dental services.
- 1.9. HOSPITAL DENTAL UNIT is a dedicated facility with staff and equipment to cater for the dental needs of all patients of the hospital.

2. Position

- 2.1. Health policy planners must recognise that the provision of oral health care is an integral part of comprehensive care to patients and plan for inclusion of community dental clinics into primary health care models.
- 2.2. Community dental clinics and dental hospitals should contribute to the education of dental students, dentists, dental specialists, allied dental personnel and other health professionals.
- 2.3. The staffing of a community dental clinic or hospital should be appropriate to its needs.
- 2.4. Dental hospitals, community dental clinics, hospital dental units, education providers and private dental clinics should all collaborate to provide timely, and appropriate oral health care and education to patients.

This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 2.5.1 Delivery of Oral Health Care: Funding: Government, 2.7.2 Delivery of Oral Health Care: Facilities: Medical Hospital Dental Units, 3.6 Higher Education Funding for the Dental Workforce, 3.7 Vocational Education for the Dental Workforce & 3.15 Post Graduate Year One Programs

Policy Statement 2.7.1

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