

COMMUNITY ORAL HEALTH PROMOTION: ELECTIVE DENTAL TREATMENT – OVERSEAS

1 Introduction

1.1 Dental treatment is being promoted in conjunction with overseas holidays to entice people to travel to foreign countries to have major dental procedures performed at costs less than those that prevail in Australia. There is potential for substandard treatment which can result in risk to both their dental and general health, and which may also require extensive and costly repair procedures on return to Australia.

1.2 **Definition**

BOARD is a Federal, State or Territory Dental Registration Board.

2 Principles

2.1 Dental training courses in Australia, and the qualifications of overseas-trained dentists, are assessed by the Australian Dental Council to ensure the maintenance of high levels of professional competence.

2.2 Dentists in Australia are registered to practise after careful scrutiny by Boards which refer to the Australian Dental Council's standards to ensure that they comply with high standards of practice.

2.3 Continuing professional development, which is widely available, assists dentists in Australia to maintain high professional standards.

2.4 The infection control standards in Australia are of world best practice standard and are enforced by the Boards.

2.5 The equipment and materials used by dentists in Australia are subject to scrutiny and approval by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, thus guaranteeing that they comply with the highest international standards.

2.6 Language and cultural differences may mean that patients receiving treatment in a foreign country may have difficulty in having their needs understood.

2.7 The diagnosis, treatment and maintenance of dental conditions are complex and the oral environment changes throughout life. Ongoing dental health cannot be achieved in a single episode or short course of treatment and requires regular visits over time.

2.8 Patients treated in Australia have recourse if there are problems with dental treatment. They have easy access to the dentist to remedy problems and their rights are protected by processes put in place by Boards, ADA Branch peer review and conciliation services, State health complaint authorities, and by common law.

- 2.9 Ongoing and corrective treatment may be compromised as the records and details of treatment obtained overseas are unlikely to be available to those providing subsequent treatment in Australia.
- 2.10 Complications to health from elective dental treatments obtained while overseas are not always covered by travel insurance and the treatments may not be covered by Australian health funds.

3 Policy

- 3.1 Australian residents should avoid traveling to countries overseas for the purpose of receiving dental treatment due to:
- limited time available;
 - possible communication difficulties with the practitioner;
 - possible lack of insurance cover for complications;
 - lack of recourse for treatment problems; and
 - lack of availability of treatment records.
- 3.2 Australian residents are advised to carefully consider before having treatment overseas whether the following are equivalent to those in Australia:
- the practitioner's qualifications;
 - infection control; and
 - quality of the materials used.

Policy Statement 1.2.6

Adopted by Federal Council, April 12/13, 2007.



APPENDIX A TO POLICY STATEMENT 1.2.6

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Australian Dental Council

The ADC is the body which accredits Australian education courses leading to dental qualifications, and also assesses the suitability for practice in Australia of persons with overseas dental qualifications.

Therapeutic Goods Administration

The TGA is the statutory body which carries out a range of assessment and monitoring activities to ensure therapeutic goods in Australia are of an acceptable standard.