

## DENTISTRY IN THE PRESENCE OF THIRD PARTIES<sup>1</sup>

### 1 Introduction

1.1 Third parties have been associated with dentistry for many years, mostly servicing commercial needs and opportunities related to dentistry.

#### 1.2 **Definition**

1.2.1 A THIRD PARTY is an outside body that can influence the relationship between the dentist and the patient. These include:

- funding agencies (e.g., government departments, agencies and statutory authorities, or private health organisations) which have responsibility for the entire fee for service, or part thereof;
- owners of dental clinics who are not dentists, e.g., health insurance funds, corporations and the public sector (government departments);
- regulatory authorities;
- the dental industry; and
- professional indemnity providers.

### 2 Principles

2.1 The primary relationship in the delivery of dental care is between the dentist and the patient.

2.2 Ideally, the dentist and the patient (or the parent, guardian, or other legally responsible person) mutually develop strategies to ensure long time optimum health outcomes.

2.3 Dentists and patients each have obligations to each other as defined by law and ethical considerations.

2.4 The placing of restrictions on professional privileges of dentists by third parties for their own financial gain is unacceptable.

### 3 Policy

3.1 Third parties must not influence the primary relationship between the dentist and the patient in any way that diminishes a patient's right to achieve long term optimum oral health.

3.2 In dealing with third parties, there is a need for a uniform coding system of dental services which must be *The Australian Schedule and Glossary of Dental Services*.

3.3 Complaints resolution mechanisms must be fair and reasonable.

<sup>1</sup> This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 4.2 *The Australian Schedule of Dental Services and Glossary*, 4.3 *Corporate Ownership, Complaints Resolution*, 4.5 *Funding Agencies*, 4.6 *Dental Industry*, 4.7 *Regulatory Authorities* & 4.8 *Professional Indemnity*.

### **Policy Statement 4.1**

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