

## DELIVERY OF ORAL HEALTHCARE FACILITIES: DENTAL HOSPITALS<sup>1</sup>

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Dental hospitals have been a part of the delivery of dental services in Australia for nearly a century.
- 1.2 Historically dental hospitals along with community dental clinics have provided free or heavily subsidised dental services to the indigent.
- 1.3 They have also become providers of dental services for special needs patients.
- 1.4 **Definitions:**
  - 1.4.1 DENTAL HOSPITAL is a publicly funded health facility providing comprehensive oral health services.
  - 1.4.2 COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINIC is a publicly funded dental facility providing at least emergency and general dental services.
  - 1.4.3 MEDICAL HOSPITAL DENTAL UNIT is a dedicated facility usually located within the outpatient department with staff and equipment to cater for the dental needs of all patients of the hospital on a referral basis.
  - 1.4.4 SPECIAL NEEDS PATIENTS are patients where intellectual disability, medical, physical or psychiatric conditions require special methods or techniques to prevent or treat oral health problems, or where such conditions necessitate special dental treatment plans.

### 2 Principles

- 2.1 The roles of dental hospitals are:
  - 2.1.1 Provision of comprehensive oral health care to persons eligible for public oral health care;
  - 2.1.2 Provision of 24 hour emergency service to the community; and

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<sup>1</sup> This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 1.5 Principles of Government Funding of Oral Health Care, 1.6.2 Delivery of Oral Health Care: Facilities: Medical Hospital Dental Units, 2.6 Higher Education Funding for the Dental Workforce & 2.7 Vocational Education Funding for the Dental Workforce.

2.1.3 Provision of other tertiary diagnostic and management expertise such as:

- major oral and maxillofacial surgical procedures requiring hospital facilities
- multidisciplinary orofacial pain clinic
- oral pathology clinic including diagnosis and management of oral disorders or oral manifestations of systemic disease
- maxillofacial prosthetic rehabilitation
- orthodontics
- special needs dentistry

2.2 Changing population demographics and disease patterns are increasing the demand for dental services provided by dental hospitals.

2.3 Preventive and interceptive dental measures are important and cost effective means of minimising morbidity and mortality in a broad range of patients including those requiring cardio-vascular surgery, oncology, orthopaedic surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and transplants.

2.4 Dental hospitals are well suited to contribute to the education of dentists and dental specialists.

### 3 Policy

3.1 Health policy planners must recognise that the provision of oral health care is an integral part of comprehensive care to patients and constitutes the standard of care for many diseases.

3.2 Dental hospitals must contribute to the education of dentists, dental specialists and other allied dental practitioners.

3.3 The staffing of a dental hospital should reflect its roles.

3.4 Dental hospitals should collaborate with community dental clinics, education providers and medical hospital dental units to provide optimal oral health care and education.

**Policy Statement 1.6.1**

Adopted by ADA Federal Council, April 16/17, 2009.