

## COMMUNITY ORAL HEALTH PROMOTION EMERGENCY OVERSEAS DENTAL TREATMENT

### 1 Introduction

1.1 Australians are enthusiastic travellers. Short-term departures have nearly tripled over the past 20 years to 4.7 million per year with the number continuing to grow. It is inevitable that some of these travellers will experience dental emergencies that will require treatment whilst they are off-shore.

1.2 There is little information and advice publicly available for travellers regarding dental emergencies or their prevention.

#### 1.3 **Definition**

SHORT TERM DEPARTURE is a departure from Australia for a period of less than twelve months.

### 2 Principles

2.1 The chance of a dental emergency whilst travelling overseas is greatly increased if the travel is begun with a pre-existing dental problem.

2.2 Third molars, commonly known as "wisdom teeth", generally erupt between the late teens through to the late twenties and may cause serious problems if they become infected.

2.3 Dental treatment may be difficult to access in some countries and the standard and range of dental treatment available may not be the same as in Australia.

2.4 Overseas dental treatment may be very expensive but the cost may be covered by travel insurance or private health insurance.

2.5 Treatment of pre-existing dental conditions is usually not covered by travel insurance.

### 3 Policy

3.1 Travellers should ensure that they do not depart from Australia with a pre-existing dental problem.

3.2 Travellers who are not receiving regular dental care, or who have not had a dental examination in the preceding six months, should have a dental examination preferably three months before departure to allow time for necessary dental treatment to be performed.

3.3 Travellers, especially young adults, should know the status of their third molars and attend to any problems well prior to departure.

3.4 Travellers should ensure that they have adequate insurance to cover the costs of emergency treatment overseas.

- 3.5 Travellers should be advised that if they experience a dental emergency whilst overseas, information on availability of treatment can be obtained from the consular services provided through Australian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates. Where there is no Australian overseas post, Canadian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates provide this advice to Australian citizens.
- 3.6 Governments and organisations providing advice to travellers should include information on the prevention and treatment of dental emergencies.

**Policy Statement 1.2.7**

Adopted by ADA Federal Council, November 15/16, 2007.