

# Policy Statement 6.28 – Teledentistry

## Position Summary

Teledentistry services must only be provided by a dental practitioner registered with the Dental Board of Australia, and only in cases where direct treatment or specialist advice cannot be accessed.

## 1. Background

- 1.1. Teledentistry and teleradiology are emerging methods of dental service delivery which require monitoring as they develop.
- 1.2. Teledentistry has the potential to be particularly beneficial for rural and remote populations. The enhanced access and reduced costs that teledentistry delivers can potentially improve health outcomes in the community by overcoming socio-economic, geographic, and cultural barriers.
- 1.3. Teledentistry services can be delivered in a synchronous (real-time) or asynchronous (data stored for future diagnosis) manner.
- 1.4. The technology required is not complex, chiefly consisting of imaging devices, a high definition display, a transmitting device and an internet connection capable of smooth real-time audio and video communication.
- 1.5. In 2014 a Teledentistry trial was supported by Google and conducted via the Oral Health Research Centre at the Melbourne Dental School, the Royal Children's Hospital and the Institute for a Broadband-Enabled Society (IBES), "Ninety per cent of the parents found it easy to understand the instructions received from the remote examiner. Two thirds of the parents who answered this question commented that the most valuable element of the remote dental examination was the avoidance of difficult and expensive travel".<sup>(1)</sup>
- 1.6. In 2018 a new form of teledentistry has become established in Australia where companies/dentists set up booths in pharmacies or shops where the public can directly access treatment even though there are no suitably qualified personnel to assist them.
- 1.7. Dental treatment is best provided in a fully equipped dental surgery.
- 1.8. Teledentistry is not suitable for procedural dental care.

## Definitions

- 1.9. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.10. DENTAL PRACTITIONER is a person registered by the Board to provide dental care.
- 1.11. TELEDENTISTRY is the use of information technology and telecommunications for the remote provision of primary dental care, consultation, education, and public awareness. (Appendix 1).

## 2. Position

- 2.1. Teledentistry services must only be provided by a dental practitioner.
- 2.2. Teledentistry must only be provided in cases where direct treatment or specialist advice cannot be provided.
- 2.3. It is not acceptable for patients to receive dental treatment without an in person examination and the ability to directly contact their dental practitioner.

This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 3.2 Dentists, 3.3 Allied Dental Personnel, 5.15 Consent to Treatment, 5.16 Informed financial consent, 5.17 Dental Records and 6.15 Dental Informatics and Digital Health

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- 2.4. Teledentistry services conducted by a dental practitioner where the patient is in a foreign country must comply with the requirements of that country's regulatory authorities, where such an authority can be identified and vice versa.
  - 2.5. Teledentistry services provided should be itemised as per The Australian Schedule of Dental Services and Glossary.
  - 2.6. Patient confidentiality and record keeping standards should be maintained as if the patient was physically present.
  - 2.7. The progress of teledentistry in Australia should be monitored and assessed.
  - 2.8. The further development of teledentistry in Australia is supported.

#### **Policy Statement 6.28**

Adopted by ADA Federal Council, April 18/19, 2019.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 24,2020

## Policy Statement 6.28 Teledentistry Services - Appendix 1

Category	Description
Tele-consultation Tele-diagnosis Tele-treatment	The patient with the local dental practitioner consults a dentist or specialist dentist, who delivers assessment and/or monitors treatment.
Tele-education Tele-training	Continuing Professional Development and training for members of the dental team.
Tele-monitoring	Regular monitoring of physical and/or biochemical parameters in chronically ill patients (i.e. dialysis and cardiorespiratory), in intensive care or emergency care settings.
Tele-support	Support to remote health facilities located in isolated areas, remote places, or in areas affected by natural disasters or armed conflict.
Tele-administration	The use of communications technology for purely administrative work (for example scheduling and managing appointments).
Consumer health information	Websites used for both clinical and educational purposes, combine different applications ranging from merely informative (static) pages to completely interactive applications.

- (1) Clarke, K; Marino, R; Manton, D; Hopcraft, M; McCullough, M; Borda, A; Hallett, K, (2014). *Paediatric teledentistry: delivering oral health services to rural and regional children*. Melbourne: Institute for a Broadband Enabled Society – University of Melbourne, p 12.