

Policy Statement 5.1 – Dentistry and Third Parties

Position Summary

The dentist patient relationship is essential for good health outcomes and, so it is unacceptable for third parties to influence it. Third Parties must provide the same rebate to the patient for the same service for the same policy and must use *The Australian Schedule of Dental Services and Glossary*.

1. Background

- 1.1. Third parties have been associated with dentistry for many years, mostly servicing commercial needs and opportunities related to dentistry.
- 1.2. Web site ratings for dental services and practices are questionable sources of information for the public as they may be misleading, have conflicts of interest, be promoting certain products and services and open to manipulation. Such web sites may contravene Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Rules.

Definitions

- 1.3. A THIRD PARTY is an outside body that can influence the relationship between the dentist and the patient. These include but are not limited to:
 - funding agencies (e.g. government departments, agencies and statutory authorities, private health insurance and private health organisations) which have responsibility for the entire fee for service, or part thereof;
 - owners of dental clinics who are not dentists, including health insurance funds, corporations and the public sector (government departments);
 - regulatory authorities;
 - the dental industry;
 - professional indemnity providers; and
 - appointment and rating websites.
- 1.4. PATIENT is a person receiving health care or any substitute authorised decision maker for those who do not have the capacity to make their own decisions.

2. Position

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. Third Parties must provide the same rebate to the patient for the same service for the same policy.
- 2.3. Third Parties should not limit or influence the patient's choice of dental provider.
- 2.4. Third parties should not impose business rules that favour any particular dentist.
- 2.5. All dentists should be treated equally.
- 2.6. All third parties must use *The Australian Schedule of Dental Services and Glossary*, which is the recognised uniform coding system for dental services in Australia.
- 2.7. Complaints resolution mechanisms must be transparent and procedurally fair.
- 2.8. Rating sites for dentists should not be published and governments should legislate to prevent them.

Policy Statement 5.1

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