

Policy Statement 6.26 – Dental Fees

Position Summary

Dentists must be able to determine their own fees.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Australian Dental Association (ADA) does not publish a scale of recommended fees because:
 - such scale takes no account of variation in overhead costs;
 - variation in the clinical content of any item of service with respect to time taken to provide the service, the technique employed, and its degree of difficulty differs in each case; and
 - such action may breach the Competition and Consumer Act 2010.
- 1.2. Data indicates that dental practices have substantial overheads.
- 1.3. The ADA regularly conducts a fee survey. The Dental Fee Survey empowers the ADA's advocacy efforts in relation to private health insurance, closing the gap between benefits schedules used for the CDBS and Veterans Affairs dental schemes, and the actual costs of providing treatment under these schemes.
- 1.4. Fixed fee schedules for government schemes have been accepted as a service to the community by the ADA and its members.
- 1.5. The ADA obtained authorisation from the ACCC to allow dentists practising in the same facility to charge the same fees if one at least one Dentist is an ADA member.
- 1.6. Rebates offered by funding agencies may not reflect fees charged by dentists.

Definition

- 1.7. FUNDING AGENCIES are third parties, which make contributions to the payment of the fees charged by dentists.

2. Position

- 2.1. Dentists must be able to determine their own fees.
- 2.2. The primary relationship in the delivery of dental care must be between the dentist and the patient.
- 2.3. Information about treatment costs should be provided to patients prior to their treatment.
- 2.4. Dentists should provide their patients with an account which includes sufficient detail to identify the nature and cost of services provided.
- 2.5. Dentists should have the discretion to charge an hourly rate or per procedure.
- 2.6. Dentists practising in the same facility should be able to charge the same fees.
- 2.7. Individual dentists should be aware of the risk involved in entering into capitation and fixed or maximum fee schemes.

This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 2.5.1 Delivery of Oral Health Care: Funding: Government, 2.5.3 Delivery of Oral Health Care: Funding: Capitation Dental Schemes, 5.1 Dentistry and Third Parties, 5.2 The Australian Schedule of Dental Services and Glossary, 5.5 Funding Agencies & 5.16 Informed Financial Consent.

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