

Policy Statement 2.7.3 – Delivery of Oral Health Care: Facilities: Dental General Anaesthesia Procedure Facilities

Position Summary

Government should provide resources and an appropriate legislative framework to ensure equal access to appropriately licensed general anaesthesia facilities that have the necessary staff and equipment to cater for the dental needs of patients.

1. Background

- 1.1. Many hospitals and day procedure centres have operating theatres, which can provide the opportunity for dental procedures to be performed under general anaesthesia. Only a small proportion of these facilities have the necessary equipment to perform dental procedures. General anaesthesia for dental procedures is also available at some specially registered dental practice facilities in Victoria.
- 1.2. Access to appropriate facilities has been decreasing over recent years on the basis of profitability related to rebate schedules and funding models.
- 1.3. General anaesthesia is necessary to provide safe and comprehensive dental care for patients of all ages with behavioural, cognitive, medical or other problems that preclude treatment in the usual dental practice setting.
- 1.4. Complex and medically compromised patients may require a general anaesthetic for examination, diagnosis and treatment planning and the precise treatment needs and theatre time can often not be established pre-operatively.
- 1.5. Dental procedures under general anaesthesia can be time consuming.

Definition

A DENTAL GENERAL ANAESTHESIA PROCEDURE FACILITY (DGAPF) is a licensed facility with an operating theatre or procedure room.

2. Position

- 2.1 The dental patient requiring general anaesthesia should have the right to access a suitable facility in a timely manner.
- 2.2 Government should provide resources and an appropriate legislative framework to ensure equitable access to DGAPF for all dental patients.
- 2.3 Timely access to DGAPF is required to permit management of conditions requiring immediate attention.
- 2.4 Reasonable access to DGAPF is required for the management of less urgent conditions.
- 2.5 Access to dental care under general anaesthesia is as essential as that for medical procedures.
- 2.6 Theatre funding for dental procedures should be commensurate to that for medical procedures of a similar duration.
- 2.7 Hospitals and day procedure centres providing general anaesthesia should not discriminate between dental and medical patients on the grounds of hospital funding models.
- 2.8 The Child Dental Benefits Schedule and any other government schemes should provide funding for treatment provided in a hospital under general anaesthesia.

This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 2.1 National Oral Health, 2.3.6 Delivery of Oral Health Care: Special Groups: Disabled Persons, 2.3.8 Delivery of Oral Healthcare: Special Groups: Infants and Pre-School Children, 2.7.1 Delivery of Oral Health Care: Facilities: Dental Hospitals, 2.7.2 Delivery of Oral Health Care: Facilities: Medical Hospital Dental Units, 3.4 Specialisation in Dentistry & 5.11 Credentialing for Hospital Practice, 2.3.1_Children.

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