

Policy Statement 2.10 – Oral Health and the Social Determinants of Health

Position Summary

All individuals should have the opportunity to live healthy lives. The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. The government should address the social factors that contribute to poor health and the ADA will continue to work with other health groups to reduce health inequalities throughout the community.

1. Background

- 1.1. Current national goals of public health policy include addressing health inequalities and social determinants of health. These follow the report of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health and the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health, Rio de Janeiro 2011.
- 1.2. The determinants of health and health inequalities are socioeconomically patterned.
- 1.3. Addressing the social determinants of health will facilitate improved health outcomes.
- 1.4. Addressing common risk factor will reduce the risks to a number of oral and systemic diseases.
- 1.5. There is a lack of translational research in health policy to validate the proposition that public health programs address the health inequalities that exist in Australia.

Definitions

- 1.6. HEALTH is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO Constitution)
- 1.7. SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels.

2. Position

- 2.1. All individuals should have the opportunity to achieve and maintain good health.
- 2.2. Governments should address the social determinants of health.
- 2.3. ADA health promotion activities should address the social determinants of health.
- 2.4. Models for oral health promotion should recognise factors that are responsible for major health issues.
- 2.5. ADA should continue to forge alliances with general health disciplines to raise the awareness of oral health and general health associations and reduce health inequalities.

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