

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 those factors that contribute to poor health. The ADA will continue to promote research, raise awareness and undertake advocacy to address these issues .

1. Background

- 1.1. Current national goals of public health policy include addressing health inequalities and social determinants of health.ⁱ
- 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 factors will reduce the risks of a number of oral and systemic diseases.
- 1.5. Further translational research in health policy is required to inform the types of public health programs that are most successful in addressing the health inequities that exist in Australia.
- 1.6. Climate change can be viewed as a threat amplifier to the social determinants of health as they can undermine:
 - 1.6.1. direct health outcomes: heat stroke, dehydration, air pollution;
 - 1.6.2. economic stability: rising cost of fresh and health food, disasters exacerbate existing social inequality;
 - 1.6.3. physical environment: risk of flooding to dental practices, increasingly hostile urban environments with heatwaves, risks of bushfires etc.

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.
- 2.6. ADA will work to address sustainability and environmental impacts as influencers of the social determinants of health.

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