

Policy Statement 2.7.4 – Delivery of Oral Health Care: Facilities: Mobile Dental Services

Position Summary

Mobile dental services should be available where fixed location clinics are not viable or suitable.

Careful planning is required to provide high quality and safe delivery of care with the ability to provide continuity of care and regular attendance for patients.

1. Background

- 1.1 State and Territory public mobile dental services have been in existence for many years. School dental services using a mobile dental service model is common in the public sector.
- 1.2 Private sector mobile dental services have been introduced more recently.
- 1.3 These services if administered appropriately and collaboratively can play an adjunctive role in providing enhanced access in areas where there is a lack of fixed service such as rural and remote areas.
- 1.4 Good oral health is supported by continuity of care and regular attendance with a dentist. This may not be achievable when primary care is provided by mobile dental services.

Definition

- 1.5 A MOBILE DENTAL SERVICE is any dental service that provides care to patients at locations other than a fixed dental clinic. This may include the use of a dental van, or portable equipment that can be taken into a variety of settings to provide access to dental care.
- 1.6 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 Mobile dental services should be available where fixed location clinics are not viable or suitable.
- 2.2 Prior to the scheduled dental visit, mobile dental services should provide patients with information about the service, including:
 - contact details both during business hours, and for after-hours emergencies,
 - guidance to appropriate available emergency services in the event of a dental emergency
 - the name of the business, whether it is a public or private sector organisation, and who owns it,
 - the names of its clinicians, and their qualifications
 - treatments made available by the mobile dental service public or private service eligibility
 - availability of returning service and frequency of service provided
- 2.3 Private sector mobile dental services providing care through publicly funded schemes (such as the CDBS) should ensure that the service is not misrepresented as a public dental service.
- 2.4 If the location to be visited is a facility such as a school, child care centre, or residential aged care facility, the owner/manager of the facility should be provided with the information.
- 2.5 The standards for safety and quality of care for mobile clinics must be the same as those for fixed clinics.

¹ 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, 3.7 Individuals Unable to Visit Dental Clinics; 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, 5.15 Consent to Treatment, 5.16 Informed financial Consent, 6.1 Infection Control, 6.11 dental Amalgam Waste and 6.14 Radiation Safety

-
- 2.6 Prior to the dental visit, a risk assessment should be conducted for each site to be visited and fulfil the requirements of work health and safety legislation
 - 2.7 Mobile dental services should have a medical emergency management plan in place that takes into consideration the locations where treatment will be provided.
 - 2.8 Wherever possible, mobile dental services should make provision for their patients to access follow up appointments, referrals, and have continuity of care in their local community, and not at distant locations.
 - 2.9 Private mobile dental services should not seek endorsement of community groups in preference to public dental services.

Policy Statement 2.7.4

Adopted by ADA Federal Council, August 23/24, 2018.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, August 19, 2021

Appendix 1 - Suggested questions for individuals or organisations to ask mobile dental service providers prior to the scheduled dental visit

1. What is the parent company of your service (if applicable), and who are the principals?
2. Is this a public or private sector dental service?
3. What types of dental services may be provided to patients during the dental visit?
4. What payment options do you offer to patients?
5. Does your service hold any form of quality and safety accreditation?
6. What level of public liability and professional indemnity insurance is held by your business? Please provide certificates of currency.
7. Will a site risk-assessment be conducted prior to the dental visit?
8. Will the names of visiting practitioners be made available to the centre prior to any visits so that Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) registration can be verified?¹
9. For each person from the mobile dental service that will be attending the centre, will proof of a Working With Children Check and a Police Check be provided before the visit?
10. Do your clinicians currently hold Radiation Use Licenses and, and will evidence of these be made available to the centre prior to any visits?
11. Please describe your processes for obtaining informed consent from parents/guardians, obtaining medical histories, and for patient matching (confirming that you have matched the correct patient with the signed consent form)
12. What techniques does your service use when providing care for people who have dental treatment fear or anxiety?
13. If treatment is needed at the first visit, how will consent be obtained if the patient cannot consent to their own treatment? How is patient follow-up arranged if additional appointments are needed? In which location(s) are follow-up appointments offered?
14. Please describe your patient referral process. What provisions do you make for patient handover to either a public or private provider? Which dentists/dental specialists would you refer patients to if this occurs? Do you provide a written referral, and are records of treatment and any radiographs made available?
15. What provision do you make for follow-up in the event of treatment failure?
16. What is your dispute resolution process?

¹ To verify dental practitioner registration, go to <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/>