

DENTISTRY SERVICES

The SWSAHS Oral Health Service provides emergency and some routine dental outpatient care including denture services to eligible patients across SWS.

Oral Health Services receive Specific Project funding from the NSW Department of Health, which is quarantined for the provision of dental services to a specified population in SWS.

In 2002/03, SWSAHS Oral Health Services triaged and provided services to 43,721 patients with over 117,000 non-admitted patient occasions of service and issued 8,846 Oral Health Fee for Service Scheme and Pensioner Denture Scheme vouchers. Over the last two years, patient demand for services has grown by 40.2%. With the population growth forecast to 2011, the demand for Oral Health Services is also expected to increase.

The dental health inpatient workload of SWSAHS is relatively small (122 hospital inpatient separations in 2002/03). Of the 37% of inpatient outflows from SWSAHS, 12% are to Royal North Shore Hospital, 8% are to Mt Druitt Hospital, and 5% are to Westmead Hospital. 91% of total oral health inpatient occasions of service are provided outside of the public hospital system in private sector hospitals.

The demand for inpatient dentistry services is projected to increase by 8.4% to 2006 and by an additional 28.2% to 2011.

In 2006, at a planned 85% occupancy, assuming no changes in flows, there will be a need for approximately 1 bed in SWSAHS hospitals.

Current Services

The SWSAHS Oral Health Service is funded to provide an outpatient Oral Health Program to Health Care Card holders and Pensioner Concession Card holders and their dependents. Commonwealth Seniors Health Card Holders also are eligible to receive the Service.

Eligible patients access oral health services across SWSAHS through the Centralised Oral Health Intake and Information Service operating across the Area.

Most Oral Health Clinics are provided in Community Health Centres across SWSAHS and some are provided at the Fairfield and Liverpool Hospitals, the Cartwright Public School and the Bankstown North Public School. In total, there are 10 adult and 10 child dental clinics, with 44 dental surgeries.

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The Service has contractual agreements with 531 private dental practitioners and dental prosthetists for the provision of emergency dental care to eligible patients and consumers under the Oral Health Fee for Service Scheme and Pensioner Denture Scheme.

The Area Director of Oral Health Services provides strategic direction, centralised intake coordination, and professional supervision of all Oral Health Services across SWSAHS.

Greater access for hospital inpatients to oral health clinics and greater access for eligible population groups to dental treatment under general anaesthesia in operating theatres would enhance service outcomes for eligible populations across SWSAHS.

Teaching and Research

The SWSAHS Oral Health Service provides ongoing professional development programs for Oral Health Staff, and participates in the Area's Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Training Program. The Service also plans to undertake research activities including smoking cessation trials and research into minimum intervention dentistry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Public Oral Health Program continue to operate within the quarantined allocation provided through NSW Health for SWSAHS eligible population, however, the Public Oral Health Program is not to fund services for hospital inpatients requiring dental services.
- Dental Services for eligible persons requiring dental procedures under general anaesthetic, whether this be in operating theatres, the Pain Centre Liverpool or in other institutions (e.g. nursing homes etc) be provided through increased access to operating theatre lists.
- Dental services to support hospital inpatient services such as cardiology, cancer, trauma and emergency be developed.
- Adult and Child Dental Services in Bankstown, Liverpool and Macarthur Health Services be consolidated in polyclinics to provide well-coordinated improved clinical outcomes.