

Policy Statement 6.13 – Partnering for Better Health – Dentists and Patients¹

Position Summary

Dentists and patients should work together, respectful of each other's rights and responsibilities to achieve the best possible health outcomes.

1. Background

- 1.1. Optimum healthcare outcomes are achieved when patients and healthcare providers work collaboratively with mutual respect.
- 1.2. There are important rights and responsibilities for both parties in the relationship between a patient and a dentist.
- 1.3. The rights and the responsibilities of patients and dentists coincide in many areas.
- 1.4. Most oral diseases are progressive, and their impact can be reduced by regular professional management and early intervention.
- 1.5. The Australian community includes people from many different cultural and religious backgrounds.
- 1.6. The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights (for patients) was developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and has been adopted by the Australian Health Minister's Conference (now called the Standing Council on Health).

Definition

- 1.7. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.8. A DENTIST is an appropriately qualified dental practitioner, registered by the Board to practise all areas of dentistry.

2. Position

- 2.1. Dentists must provide patient-centred care which includes consideration of the health, welfare, wishes and safety of their patients.
- 2.2. Dentists must have professional autonomy and clinical freedom whilst working within all accepted ethical and regulatory frameworks.
- 2.3. Dentists should provide all relevant information to patients, about their oral health and discuss treatment options including the limitations of modern professional dental care to ensure valid consent.
- 2.4. Patients should regularly attend their dentist for examinations and reduce their oral health risk factors such as poor oral hygiene, poor diet, tobacco and illicit drug use.
- 2.5. Patients should disclose relevant information to their dentist that may influence the provision of care in regard to their general health, cultural and religious values, and personal health beliefs.
- 2.6. Dentists and patients should work together, in order to achieve the best possible health outcomes.
- 2.7. Dentists should ensure that their behavior, the materials used, and treatments performed by them are in accordance with the cultural and religious values of their patients.
- 2.8. The rights and responsibilities of patients and rights and responsibilities of dentists should be recognised by the Board in an appropriate professional standard.

¹ This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statement: 5.16 *Informed Financial Consent*

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