

## Vision and principles for improving Victoria's oral health

### Vision

All Victorians will enjoy good oral health and will have access to high-quality health care delivered in an affordable and timely fashion when they require it.

In achieving this vision, the Government will implement effective population health measures, provide dental care for disadvantaged Victorians and build the capacity of the dental health system and workforce.

### Principle one: The best place to treat

Dental care will be provided in community-based settings, whenever it is safe and cost-effective to do so. Dental services will be brought together with other ambulatory care services and integrated to improve accessibility, availability and quality of care. Dental services will build safety and continuous quality improvement into their systems. Dental clinicians will be regulated to ensure professional conduct and fitness to practice.

### Principle two: Together we do better

Planning for good oral health will incorporate a population health approach that recognises the social determinants of health and prioritises health promotion and illness prevention. The provision of dental care will be based on partnerships among levels of government and public and private health care services. Individuals, families and carers, will be encouraged to take more responsibility for their health care and will receive support for self-management.

### Principle three: Technology to benefit people

There will be a consistent, planned approach to developing the infrastructure for the delivery of integrated health care, including dental care, which includes information and communications technology (ICT), standard tools and protocols, facilities and equipment. ICT will be used to better inform people about their dental health and about how to better manage their health.

### Principle four: A better health care experience

Care will be 'person and family centred', focusing on the needs of the whole person as these change over time. People will have equitable, timely and appropriate access to dental care regardless of where they live. The delivery of dental care will be based on the best evidence available and will be planned on an area basis to meet the needs of defined populations.

Information about people and the services they receive will be consistently managed and coordinated across health care services to protect privacy and support integrated service delivery and continuity of care. Funding and accountability arrangements for the delivery of quality dental care will support the provision of the right care, at the right time, and in the right place.

## Principle five: A better place to work

The dental workforce will be configured to deliver integrated health care. The future workforce will be flexible and multi-skilled to deliver care in a variety of settings. The full range of dental providers will be available to work together and provide an appropriate and multidisciplinary range of professional expertise. Consolidation of service delivery in community-based settings will support improved working conditions, more efficient use of the workforce, and better quality systems.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Dental Health Services Victoria

Dental Health Services Victoria is the leading public sector oral health agency.

Dental Health Services Victoria has a statewide leadership role in:

- Training, recruiting and retaining of the oral health workforce, including the establishment of partnerships with universities in the education, training, and continuing professional development of clinicians; and the development and provision of re-entry and mentoring programs for the oral health workforce.
- Oral health promotion including setting the agenda, leading oral health promotion initiatives, integrating oral health promotion into health promotion more generally and developing oral-health-specific health promotion resources.
- Quality assurance, including clinical leadership and ensuring compliance with relevant standards.

Dental Health Services Victoria has lead responsibility for:

- Purchasing integrated community dental services
- Planning the best distribution of purchased services
- Providing generalist and specialist services through the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne.

### Department of Human Services

The department has lead responsibility for:

- Policy development
- Capital and service planning
- Funding and accountability.

DHS regional offices have overall responsibility for local primary health service and capital planning and coordination of department-funded services. The regional offices will therefore contribute to dental services and capital planning.

### Community Health Services

Community Health Services are responsible for:

- Delivery of integrated community-based dental care
- Local health promotion activity.

## Minimum standards

The following minimum standards have been adapted from the National Oral Health Plan to provide performance benchmarks for the Victorian oral health system:

### Standards for children

- Children should receive emergency dental care as needed, with priority based on clinical need.
- Children should receive at least one course of oral health care, including appropriate oral health promotion, every two years. Children with greater dental needs should be recalled more frequently.

### Standards for adults

- Adults should receive emergency oral health care as needed, with priority based on clinical need.
- Adults should receive at least one course of general dental care every three years on average.
- Adults who require denture services should have access to a set of dentures once every eight years on average, with dentures being approved more frequently only where indicated by clinical parameters.

### Standards for the whole population

- Decayed teeth and other oral disease should be treated in time to prevent expensive, complicated oral health care and tooth loss.
- Oral health care should always include the provision of information to the client and/or their parents to enable them to prevent further oral disease.
- Oral health care should be provided within the local community in a socially and culturally acceptable manner.

