

MEDIA RELEASE

20 March 2019



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MOBILE DENTAL VANS IN SCHOOLS

ADA NSW welcomes the commitment by the NSW Government to invest an additional \$70 million towards dental care for children, but we would encourage the government to ensure the funding is directed to those most in need.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic health condition affecting children (and adults). In 2016-17, dental conditions accounted for more potentially preventable hospitalisations in NSW among children aged 5-9 years than any other health condition. More than 4,100 children aged 5-9 years were admitted to NSW hospitals with potentially preventable dental conditions, nearly double those with asthma.

“The public system is under-funded, and there is definitely a need for greater financial investment in dental health care,” the President of ADA NSW, Dr Neil Peppitt said.

“However, ADA NSW does not believe providing dental treatment in mobile vans is best practice. In the same way that most of us have a regular GP, ADA NSW believes best practice for providing dental treatment is with a regular dentist who can provide continuity of care, or treatment at your local public dental health clinic.

“Parents, guardians or carers should always be present at children’s dental appointments to give informed consent to planned dental care and to ensure they understand any treatment costs.

“Following the conviction of a private mobile dental company last year, ADA NSW issued a statement highlighting our concerns about private mobile dental vans providing dental treatment to children in a school setting. We were pleased that the Health Minister’s office today confirmed the mobile dental vans will be run by NSW Health.”

There is one general Medicare-funded dental program for children called the Child Dental Benefit Schedule (CDBS), which provides up to \$1000 of dental treatment for eligible children, aged 2-17 over two calendar years for a range of dental treatments in a private setting or in most Local Health District (LHD) public dental services. Eligible children can be treated and bulk billed through Medicare at a local private dentist.

“The Medicare-funded CDBS is underutilised because of a lack of awareness. We would like to see both the state and federal governments promoting the CDBS to parents and through schools.”

The latest waiting list data by NSW Health shows that Western Sydney has the most number of children waiting for dental treatment. As of 30 September 2018, there were 3,410 children in the Western Sydney Local Area Health District who were waiting for dental treatment in a public clinic. This is followed by the Sydney LHD with 2,314 then Northern Sydney with 112 children waiting for treatment.

The Central Coast LHD had 12 children on the waiting list as of 30 September 2018 and the Mid North Coast had two.

About ADA NSW: ADA NSW is the peak professional association for dentists and dental students in NSW and the ACT with 4,400 members, representing 70 per cent of dentists. ADA NSW has been supporting dentists and promoting good oral health in the community since 1929.

Media Contact: Kate Miranda, ADA NSW Head of Communications & Public Affairs, 0408 409 155

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By comparison, there is no general Medicare funded program for adults and the waiting lists for adults are comparatively large. In the Sydney LHD, there are 11,716 adults on the public dental waiting list and in Hunter New England LHD, there are 10,843 adults waiting for dental treatment.

For more information on ADA NSW's position on private mobile dental vans in schools, visit: <https://www.adansw.com.au/About/ADA-NSW-Position-Statement-Private-Mobile-Dental-V.aspx>

For more information on the CDBS, visit: <https://www.adansw.com.au/Community/PublicCDBS>

The table below and more NSW Health Waiting list information can be found at: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth/pages/public-dental-care-waiting.aspx>

Local Health District	Child Assessment	Child Treatment	Adult Assessment	Adult Treatment
Central Coast	710	12	4,375	1,187
Hunter New England	195	2	973	10,843
Mid North Coast	89	2	225	2,820
Northern NSW	235	63	2,397	6,740
Northern Sydney	1,075	112	1,748	3,236
Far West	12	0	324	187
Nepean Blue Mountains	145	62	171	4,371
South Western Sydney	0	15	117	8,353
Sydney	0	2,314	593	11,716
Western NSW	544	117	301	6,089
Western Sydney	209	3,410	273	9,068
Illawarra Shoalhaven	12	1	3,554	4,302
Murrumbidgee	46	12	1,608	279
South Eastern Sydney	182	0	1,528	4,648
Southern NSW	15	16	1,153	503
Total	3,469	6,138	19,340	74,342

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