

Media Release

Provider Numbers for Oral Health Practitioners

The Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists Association Ltd (ADOHTA) and the Dental Hygienists Association of Australia Ltd (DHAA) are pleased to advise that the policy change to allow dental hygienists, dental therapists and oral health therapists to apply for a provider number from Service Australia and to claim directly for services provided under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) within the respective scope of practice has been given preliminary approval by the Government. The Department of Health is now working towards implementing the change with a planned commencement date of 1 July 2022.

The proposed changes will align the professional groups with billing rights under the CDBS with the Scope of Practice Standard for dental hygienists, dental therapists and oral health therapists, approved by the Council of Australian Governments Health Council in November 2019.

DHAA President Ms Cheryl Dey thanked the large number of members, federal and state parliamentarians, many other organisations for their advice and support throughout the process.

ADOHTA President Dr Nicole Stormon acknowledged the hard work of our oral health leaders over the past decade. "We have come far in gaining recognition of our skills and qualifications, with the removal of 'supervised' practice, becoming independent practitioners and now the ability to gain Medicare provider numbers".

This is the first step towards enhancing public access to oral health service as the change only applies to the Commonwealth Government's CDBS. ADOHTA and DHAA are working together to negotiate with the private health insurance sector on behalf of the profession to have the provider numbers recognised by various health funds.

Both presidents agreed that this will eventually provide the Australian public with better access and choice, particularly where there are significant service gaps such as those in aged care and rural Australia.

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