

SCHOOL DENTAL THERAPY — STATISTICS

5304. Mr A.P. O'Gorman to the Minister for Health

- (1) How many children received emergency general anaesthetic for dental extraction in the past 12 months?
- (2) What was the main reason for children being admitted to hospital over the past 12 months?
- (3) Under the General Agreement 4, School Dental Therapy Assistants were granted an attraction and retention bonus of \$3,000 per annum; and
 - (a) will this continue under General Agreement 5?
- (4) How many School Dental Therapy Assistant positions are currently vacant?
- (5) When will School Dental Clinics receive computers to better manage their patients?
- (6) When will training be provided to the School Dental Therapy Assistants to use those computers?
- (7) How many male School Dental Therapy Assistants are employed by the Department of Health?
- (8) What is the average age of School Dental Therapy Assistants?
- (9) What is being done to attract applicants to this field?
- (10) What is the career progression for School Dental Therapy Assistants?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

- (1) 335 cases recorded as requiring emergency dental extractions under general anaesthetic between 1 May 2010 to 30 April 2011.
- (2) The top ten reasons for children (less than 18 years of age) being admitted to hospital* between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010 according to the Australian Refined Diagnosis Related Groups version 6.0 (DRG v6.0), are in descending order:
 1. Otitis Media and upper respiratory infections.
 2. Bronchitis without complications or co-morbidities.
 3. Viral illnesses.
 4. Dental extractions and restorations.
 5. Whooping cough and acute bronchiolitis without complications or co-morbidities.
 6. Oesophagitis and gastroenteritis without catastrophic or severe complications or co-morbidities.
 7. Injury to forearm, wrist, hand or foot.
 8. Tonsillectomy and/or adenoidectomy.
 9. Neonate above 2499g without significant operating room procedure without problem.
 10. Neonate above 2499g without significant operating room procedure with other problem.

* Public hospitals and public patients at Peel and Joondalup Health Campuses.
- (3)
 - (a) The Attraction and Retention Benefit of \$3,000 per annum paid to Dental Clinic Assistants has been extended for 12 months. The Department of Health will conduct within the next six months a review of the Dental Clinic Assistant classification structure. The objective will be to establish a sustainable classification regime which is recognised as essential for sustaining public dental services.
- (4) 8 dental clinic assistant positions are presently vacant in the School Dental Service.
- (5) A business case for the implementation of Clinical Information Systems Infrastructure in the School Dental Service (Dental Therapy Clinics) is under consideration by the North Metropolitan Area Health Service (NMAHS) for funding approval. Development of the electronic patient management system is continuing in anticipation of funding approval.
- (6) The business case described in (5) includes provision for increased staffing to undertake the necessary training for clinical staff in the School Dental Service as part of the implementation process once funding is confirmed.
- (7) Nil.
- (8) 45 years of age.
- (9) There are a number of initiatives currently being undertaken in this regard:
 - (a) Answer as above in 3(a).

- (b) Dental Clinic Assistant (DCA) students from the two major training providers are allocated to a dental therapy centre as part of their course to not only learn DCA skills but to appreciate and understand the benefits of employment in the public sector.
 - (c) The Coordinator Dental Assisting Services from Dental Health Services provides a pre graduation presentation on the benefits of public sector employment.
 - (d) The benefits of public sector employment are actively promoted to the students by the training providers.
- (10) Dental Clinic Assistants working in the School Dental Service are able to transfer to a general (adult) dental clinic and progress to a Senior DCA or Dental Clinic Coordinator position.