

## Oral Care

### 725.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The intent of this policy is to ensure that inmates have access to dental care and treatment for serious dental needs. While the focus of this policy is primarily on urgent and emergent dental care, as with medical or mental health care, dental care is available based upon patient need.

### 725.2 POLICY

Oral care for inmates shall be provided under the direction of a licensed dentist. Dental care should be timely and include immediate access for urgent or painful conditions. Protocols will be established regarding priorities for care when, in the dentist's judgment, the inmate's health would otherwise be adversely affected (Wis. Admin. Code DOC § 350.15(5)).

#### 725.2.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Infection control practices** - Are defined by the American Dental Association (ADA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as including sterilizing instruments, disinfecting equipment and properly disposing of hazardous waste.

**Oral care** - Includes instruction in oral hygiene, examinations and treatment of dental problems. Instruction in oral hygiene minimally includes information on plaque control and the proper brushing of teeth.

**Oral examination** - Includes taking or reviewing the patient's oral history, an extra-oral head and neck examination, charting of teeth and examination of the hard and soft tissue of the oral cavity with a mouth mirror, explorer and adequate illumination.

**Oral screening** - Includes visual observation of the teeth and gums, and notation of any obvious or gross abnormalities requiring immediate referral to a dentist.

**Oral treatment** - Includes the full range of services that in the supervising dentist's judgment are necessary for proper mastication and for maintaining the inmate's health status.

### 725.3 ACCESS TO DENTAL SERVICES

Emergency and medically required dental care is provided to each inmate upon request. Dental services are not limited to extractions. It is the goal of dental services to alleviate pain and suffering, ensure that inmates do not lose teeth merely as a consequence of incarceration and to provide appropriate dental service whenever medically required to maintain nutrition (Wis. Admin. Code DOC § 350.14(1)).

Access to dental services should be as follows:

- (a) All inmates wishing to see the dentist for a non-emergency issue shall complete a sick call form. Requests should be triaged according to the nature and severity of the problem and should be seen by a dentist according to assigned priority. Inmates

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requesting dental services on weekends or after hours will initially be evaluated by a qualified health care professional and referred appropriately.

- (b) If an inmate suffers obvious trauma or other dental emergency, the qualified health care professional may arrange for immediate access to a dentist or may transfer the inmate to an emergency room for treatment.
- (c) Records documenting all dental treatment should be maintained in the inmate's medical record file and retained in accordance with established records retention schedules.
- (d) Medications prescribed by a dentist should be administered in accordance with pharmacy procedures and documented in the inmate's medical record.
- (e) Necessary dental services identified by a dentist that are not available on-site should be provided by referral to community resources as deemed necessary by the facility dentist.

#### **725.4 DENTAL CARE OPTIONS**

Inmates should be offered an oral screening by a qualified health care professional or a dentist within 14 days of incarceration. This oral screening should include an evaluation of the current dental status and instruction on oral hygiene and preventive oral education.

Inmates should be offered a dental examination, performed by a dentist, within 12 months of incarceration.