

Submission
No 35

INQUIRY INTO DENTAL SERVICES IN NSW

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Theme:

Summary

23 May 2005

The Standing Committee on Social Issues
Legislative Council of NSW
Parliament House
Sydney NSW

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Inquiry into Dental Services in NSW

The Southern Highlands Older Women's Network supports the submission made to you by the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW, in relation to the above inquiry.

In particular, SHOWN is concerned with:

Quality of care received in dental services

Temporary measures taken to treat problems are not always effective and subsequent delays experienced before receiving appropriate and complete treatment may result in a greater dental crisis.

Waiting times for treatment in public services

Long waiting periods for access to public dental services inevitably impact upon other areas of health. Poor dental health leads to poor nutrition. There is also the risk of the infection from teeth and gums spreading throughout the body with subsequent need for antibiotics and, for elderly patients, admission to hospital.

Impact of Private Health Insurance

Many of our members simply do not have the financial resources to afford the private health insurance dental cover that would allow them to pursue private treatment. Even with this cover the gap fees may be prohibitive for people on a limited income, resulting in them not having the treatment needed.

Regional Access

As with many regional health services, access and availability to dental care in rural areas is always an issue. For example, people needing new dentures can experience waiting periods of over a year.

Yours sincerely,

Robyn Smith
Coordinator
Southern Highlands Older Women's Network.