Latest performance figures (February 2013 to March 2014) show substantial improvements in the number of dental patients on the waiting list and also the time patients have to wait for a dental check up in the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS).

SCHHS Chief Executive Kevin Hegarty said the number of people waiting for more than two years for General Care had reduced from 4204 in February 2013 to just 207 by the end of March 2014. Currently there are no patients waiting longer than two years.

The SCHHS Director of Oral Health Dr Elaine Mawdsley said a number of initiatives had contributed to the improved waiting times.

“Our visiting oral health community dental van is one strategy that has assisted in reducing the waiting time for eligible public dental patients.

“The dental van supplements the work being done at the Oral Health Clinics across our Health Service.”

“We have employed new graduate dentists at Gympie and Kawana to add to our workforce and also been able to greatly improve access to dental care for patients through our partnerships with private practitioners,” Dr Mawdsley said.

“The dental voucher scheme offers emergency patients the opportunity to see a private dentist, thus enabling public dentists to devote more of their time to treating patients from the waiting lists. It also allows patients to have a check up or have dentures made by a private dental practitioner.”

During the reporting period, the following occasions of service were achieved:

- 486 patients received dentures at private dental prosthetist
- 7278 emergency patients treated at private dental practices
- 4327 patients had a check up and majority of treatment provided
Mr Hegarty said the SCHHS is committed to ensuring local residents continue to have access to oral health services when and where they need it most.

“Whilst this reduction has been achieved by increased efficiencies and improved engagement with the private sector, we must also acknowledge our local Oral Health staff for their continuing work in providing these services,” he added.

Photo opportunity : A SCHHS dentist in clinical environment

ENDS

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