



Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)
The Royal College of Surgeons of England

Primary Care Contracting

29 November 2007

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of national standards for prison dentists

The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) has worked with the Department of Health, the Oxford Deanery, the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry and NHS Primary Care Contracting to develop standards for prison dentists and those commissioning prison dental services.

The *Guidelines for the Appointment of Dentists with Special Interests (DwSIs) in Prison Dentistry* is intended to help prison managers and healthcare commissioners define more closely the role and working arrangements for prison dentists. The competency frameworks set out in the document will also help prison dentists to identify their learning needs, and undertake further training so that they can improve standards of care.

The dental health needs of prisoners differ from those of the general population. Prisoners generally have a poorer standard of oral health, with increased levels of emergency cases, higher rates of substance misuse and smoking, and underlying poor nutrition. The demand for dental care in prisons is also increasing as the prison population continues to grow.

According to Helen Falcon, Postgraduate Dental Dean for NHS Education South Central (Oxford and Wessex Deaneries) and Chair of the working group which developed the guidelines, "Prison dentists, along with other healthcare workers in the prison setting, are in a unique position in that they are required to balance the need to provide the best possible care to their patients with the priorities and restrictions imposed by the prison environment. These include the inability to provide sedation and general anaesthesia within the prison setting, different protocols for pre- and post-operative pain relief, the need to minimise referrals outside of the prison, and security issues."

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The FGDP(UK) and the Department of Health have previously published national guidelines for the appointment of DwSIs in the fields of orthodontics, periodontics, endodontics and minor oral surgery. Standards for the appointment of DwSIs in conscious sedation are currently being developed, with a launch expected in early 2008.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. The guidelines will be formally launched by Mr Barry Cockcroft, Chief Dental Officer for England, at 4pm on Thursday 29th November 2007 at the Royal Institute of British Architects.
2. Further information on DwSIs, written for dentist, PCT and patient audiences, as well as all DwSI guidelines published to date, can be found at www.fgdp.org.uk/dwsi/. Also see www.primarycarecontracting.nhs.uk/249.php.
3. The link to this press release is www.fgdp.org.uk/news/pdf/pr_nov07_dwsi_prison_dentistry.pdf. Images and logos are available on request.
4. The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) is the academic home for general dental practitioners (GDPs) and dental care professionals (DCPs) in the UK. Based at The Royal College of Surgeons of England, it aims to promote excellence in the standards of patient care in general dental practice by encouraging involvement in postgraduate training and assessment, education and research. The FGDP(UK) supports the career development of both GDPs and DCPs and recognises the value of an integrated dental team in modern dentistry.

For more information, please contact Charlotte Worker on 020 7869 6759 or cworker@rcseng.ac.uk. Also visit www.fgdp.org.uk for further details.