

**Question on Notice
No. 673
Asked on 12 September 2013**

DR DOUGLAS asked the Minister for Health (MR SPRINGBORG)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the Nerang Community Dental Clinic -

- (1) What is the waiting time for appointments?
- (2) How many patients were treated annually in the past five years?
- (3) Are there any plans to relocate or close the clinic?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Gaven for his question.

In response to Member's questions, the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service has provided the advice below.

- (1) The waiting time to be contacted for an offer of treatment by the Gold Coast Oral Health Service (GCOHS) is 11 months as set out in the below table. After the initial contact the patient / client is required to contact the Oral Health Call Centre to arrange an appointment where they will be offered the next available appointment (two to four weeks), or are offered an 'outsourcing voucher' to receive treatment privately.

Table 1.

Oral Health Wait List Data - Total patients waiting for Oral Health Service as of 13 September 2013							
General Wait list	Priority Code	Placement Date (Longest)	Waiting Time	Wait List Status			
				Recommended wait time	Waiting	Contacted	Appointment Made
	6	9.10.2012	11 Months	< 2 years	594	187	154

Wait List Status *Definitions used in Table 1.*

Waiting	Patients who are currently waiting on the General Wait List and have not yet been contacted via mail for an appointment
Contacted	Patients who have been contacted via mail and have not yet contacted the service to make an appointment
Appointment Made	Patients who have been contacted and have made an appointment to begin treatment with the GCOHS via Community Dental Service or Outsource Partners

Table 2

Nerang Outsourcing since 15 March 2013				
	Number Issued	Cost of Vouchers issued	Number Claimed	Cost of Vouchers claimed
*1 Emergency (\$270)	1638	\$442,260	1448	\$367,777.20
*2 General Dental treatment vouchers (\$770)	365	\$281,050	280	\$240,832.95
Denture treatment vouchers	15	\$24000	0	\$0
Total	2018	\$747,310	1728	\$608,610.15

*1 Emergency outsourcing vouchers are provided for the relief of pain and problems associated with individual teeth.

*2 General outsourcing vouchers allow a patient to have all oral health needs addressed except Dentures.

(2) It is difficult to provide data on the number of patients treated at Nerang for the last five years. The following data shows the number of dental appointments attended by patients in the last five years. In 2009 and 2010, the Nerang Dental Clinic rostered three dental officers and a prosthodontist (dentures). Since 2011, the service has rostered two Dentists at Nerang and converted the third surgery into a school dental surgery to meet the demand from the Child and Adolescent Oral Health Service. The funded FTE for Dentists has remained the same; one dentist was redeployed to an area of greater need.

Table 3

Clinic Productivity	1 Jan - 31 Dec 2008	1 Jan - 31 Dec 2009	1 Jan - 31 Dec 2010	1 Jan - 31 Dec 2011	1 Jan - 31 Dec 2012	1 Jan - 31 Dec 2013 (as at 13/9/13)
Nerang	9,025	11,794	10,204	8,594	8,170	7,053

Table 3 only includes the occasions of service for patients who actually received their dental treatment at Nerang clinic. Outsourcing vouchers are recorded against the private clinic that provides the treatment to the patient. The number of occasions of service for the private providers treating Nerang patients is difficult to obtain as the IT system used to record data does not distinguish the clinic the voucher came from.

(3) The Nerang Dental Clinic currently occupies leased premises. The building changed ownership recently and the new owners have informally advised the GCOHS that they are planning to redevelop the building.

The current lease is due to expire at the end of 2016. The Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service are currently investigating options for the provision of care to the patients serviced by the Nerang Dental Clinic, should the current lease arrangements be altered.