

Question on Notice

No. 390

Asked on 16 April 2024

MR L MILLAR ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise (a) the number of public dental patients on the waiting list for treatment at the Emerald Hospital and (b) what initiatives are in place to address this, particularly for patients requiring dentures?

ANSWER

- a) As the waiting lists are reported on the last day of the month, the following information relates to 31 March. There are several types of waiting lists for Hospital and Health Service Oral Health Services and patients are allocated to a waiting list according to their clinical need and urgency.

The general waiting list is for patients who require a non-urgent dental examination and treatment, i.e., routine dental checkup. As of the 31 March 2024, there were a total of 513 patients on the general care waiting list at Emerald Dental Clinic. All of these patients were waiting within the clinically recommended timeframe of two years.

The priority waiting lists are for priority, specialised or specialist dental care, including dentures. This waiting list requires a clinical assessment or referral and patients are assigned to categories 1, 2 and 3 (with recommended clinical timeframes of 1, 3 and 12 months respectively) based on clinical urgency.

As of the 31 March 2024, there were a total of 74 patients on the priority care waiting list at Emerald Dental Clinic. All of these patients were waiting within the clinically recommended timeframe for their category of care.

- b) The Hospital and Health Services locally determine how dental funding is used to address waiting lists. Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service (CQHHS) has maintained wait times for general and priority dental care at Emerald Dental Clinic within the recommended timeframes.

This has been achieved primarily through services provided by public oral health staff at Emerald Dental Clinic. The service includes a team of dentists, prosthetists, oral health therapists and dental assistants delivering public dental care to eligible patients. In addition to state funding, CQHHS directly claims Medicare funding for dental treatment for eligible children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule. This funding enables additional investment in public dental services for the region.