

## HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY

**TITLE: Authorisation to practise in a restricted practice area, namely, the provision of care and services to adults by a dental therapist**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: September 2005**

**REVIEW DATE: September 2006, May 2009**

**BOARD: Dental Board of the Northern Territory**

### Introduction

The Dental Board of the Northern Territory (the Board) has a primary mandate of protecting the public. It does this by carrying out functions under section 10 of the *Health Practitioners Act 2004*, (the Act). Some of the key functions of the Board are:

- to monitor the standards and provision of health care services
- to monitor the competence of practitioners
- to provide guidance on clinical conduct and ethical matter to practitioners

Dental therapists who wish to provide dental care and services to adults must satisfy the Board that they have the requisite skills, knowledge, expertise and recent practise to do so.

### Supporting documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Health Practitioners Act 2004*, the *Code of Practice for Dental Therapists and Dental Hygienists* and the Dental Board of the Northern Territory's *Entitlement to Registration Policy*.<sup>1</sup>

### Supervision Requirements

The *Health Practitioners Act 2004* ('the Act') regulates the practice of dental therapists in the Northern Territory. Section 40(2)(c)(i) of the Act provides that a person who is registered as a dental therapist is authorised to practise in the Territory "under the direct or indirect supervision of a person who is registered as a dentist or dental specialist." The Act defines supervision to "include oversight, direction, guidance and support." It is expected that the level of supervision provided will reflect the complexity of the treatment being provided, as well as the education, experience and clinical decision making of the dental therapist.

Direct supervision occurs when the supervising dentist/dental specialist is actually on the same premises and is able to work alongside the dental therapist to provide immediate chairside assistance and interventions as required.

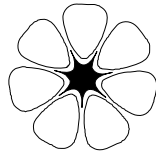
### Who can apply for authorisation to practise in a restricted practice area?

Section 32 of the Act states:

- (1) A registered health practitioner may apply for an authorisation to practise in a restricted practise area if the health practitioner -

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<sup>1</sup> The *Health Practitioners Act* and policies are available at:  
[www.health.nt.gov.au/Health\\_Professions\\_Licensing\\_Authority\\_HPLA/Legislation/index.aspx](http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Health_Professions_Licensing_Authority_HPLA/Legislation/index.aspx) .



- (a) has the qualification, training and experience determined by the relevant Board in respect of the area of practise; or
- (b) has qualifications, training and experience that the relevant Board considers to be a least substantially equivalent to those determined by it under paragraph (a).

### **Who is entitled to authorisation?**

Section 34 of the Act states that an applicant for an authorisation is entitled to be granted the authorisation if the relevant Board is satisfied that the applicant –

- (a) is eligible to apply for the authorisation; and
- (b) is competent and has the capacity to practise in the restricted practise area.

### **Board requirements**

To be eligible and entitled to apply to the Board for an authorisation to practise in a restricted practice area, namely the provision of care and services to adults by a dental therapist, the dental therapist:

- must be registered as a dental therapist in the Northern Territory and hold a current practising certificate;
- must hold a registrable qualification from a training institution that has been accredited by the Australian Dental Council<sup>2</sup> that includes the treatment of adults;
- must provide evidence of appropriate recency of treating adults within the last 5 years;
- must provide evidence of competency of practise in the proposed scope of practice in treating adults; and

A successful applicant will be issued with an annual practising certificate that clearly shows that he/she is a registered dental therapist authorised to practise in a restricted practice area, namely, the provision of care and services to adults.

Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with a Notice of Decision that provides the reasons as to why the Board has refused to grant an authorisation.

### **Appeals**

Dental therapists who are dissatisfied with the Board's decision regarding an application for authorisation may lodge an appeal to the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory.

### **Successfully registered as a Dental Therapist authorised to provide care services to adults**

The responsibilities for those dental therapists and for their supervising dentists are to:

1. know the statutory limits to their clinical practice;
2. only provide dental care and services appropriate to their level of skills and training; and
3. ensure they do not practise without direct supervision.

\*\*All forms and any other updated information can be found on the Dental Board of the Northern Territory's website [www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards](http://www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards)

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<sup>2</sup> Information regarding accredited training courses in Australia view Australian Dental Council's website [www.adc.org.au](http://www.adc.org.au)