



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Health

Reference: Health - Canberra Health Services

Hearing: 11 November 2025

In relation to: Dental services

Question received: 17 November 2025

Answer Due: 26 November 2025

- 1) What is the current average wait time for a clinically assessed non-urgent adult patient in the ACT public dental system? What is the longest recorded wait time in the most recent full financial year?
- 2) How many adult patients in the ACT public dental system waited longer than 12 months for treatment? How many of those were subsequently referred to emergency?
- 3) What targeted strategies is the government employing to reduce those long wait times? How much funding is committed to that? When are measurable improvements expected?

MINISTER STEPHEN-SMITH MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- 1) Canberra Health Services' (CHS) dental clients are not clinically assessed before being placed on a wait list as clients can self-refer for general and emergency treatment. As of 31 October 2025, the current average wait time for CHS Dental general restorative treatment was just under 10 months. For non-clinically assessed clients, the longest wait time was 16 months as of 30 June 2025.
- 2) CHS Dental is unable to accurately determine how many adult clients waited longer than 12 months due to several variables including clients not attending appointments, clients cancelling with CHS Dental partnered private providers, and/or delaying booking their initial appointments.

The number of clients who were subsequently referred to emergency is not data available to CHS. CHS Dental does not refer clients to emergency unless it is a trauma case.

- 3) The ACT Government is committed to ongoing improvements to reduce wait times for clients. Measures of improvement to evaluate progress have already been recognised such as improvements in relation to general wait times and General Anaesthetic (GA) wait lists. Other strategies include robust contract procurement processes with partnered private providers and the recent adoption of SMS messaging to introduce an additional communication avenue with clients who reach the top of the wait list. Currently there are adequate clinicians and partnered private providers to meet demand, and the CHS Dental Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) DWAU quota (activity-based funding) was met and exceeded.

The recent significant reduction in wait time reflects a funding increase to the partnered private provider scheme. The funding has increased from \$1,822,905 to \$2,840,485 for the 2025-26 financial year.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:



Date:

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By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith