



Guidelines on the treatment of family members by dental practitioners

These guidelines must be read in conjunction with the *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999*, the *Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001*, the *Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act 2006* and the Queensland Nursing Council and Health Practitioners Registration Boards Statement on Sexual Relationships between Health Practitioners and their Patients 2005.

Background:

The Dental Board of Queensland ("the Board") is responsible under the *Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001* ("the Act") to protect the public by ensuring health care is delivered by registrants in a professional safe and competent way.

The Board has endorsed the Queensland Nursing Council and Health Practitioners Registration Boards Statement on Sexual Relationships between Health Practitioners and their Patients 2005 and has resolved to provide a guideline for Dental Practitioners treating their own family members.

Guidelines:

A Dental Practitioner who provides treatment to his or her spouse or family members must ensure that:

- clinical boundaries are preserved within the confines of the clinical situation;
- patient confidentiality is maintained at all times, including after treatment and if the patient ceases to be a family member/relative;
- proper records are kept complying with the relevant Policy; and
- the treatment provided is in all respects comparable to that which would be provided to a patient who was not a family member. .

If the Dental Practitioner has reasonable cause to suspect that:

- he or she may be unable to treat the patient and maintain professional boundaries;
- he or she may be unable to preserve confidentiality;
- his or her clinical judgement may be compromised by a lack of objectivity; or
- his or her clinical judgement may be affected by a conflict of interest;

then the Dental Practitioner must refer that patient to another Dental Practitioner for treatment, except in cases of emergency or urgent need.

References:

Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999

Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001

Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act 2006

Queensland Nursing Council and Health Practitioners Registration Boards Statement on Sexual Relationships between Health Practitioners and their Patients 2005