

Media Release

1 February 2019

Community health centre dentists to take unprecedented 24-hour stop-work action



Public sector dentists working at 10 community health agencies across Victoria will walk off the job for a 24-hour stop-work on Monday 4 February as they continue their attempts to negotiate a new enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) with their employers.

More than two thirds of dentists and dental specialists working across the public sector have now signed on to the new agreement, leaving these agencies in the minority. The current agreement expired more than 18 months ago, and the dentists at these sites are frustrated with the lack of progress in the negotiations.

The strong advocacy efforts of the Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch (ADAVB) and Professionals Australia have ensured that there was a funding guarantee from the Department of Health and Human Services over the lifetime of the agreement to cover the cost of the new EBA. Despite this funding guarantee, twelve community health agencies refuse to commit to the new agreement.

“ADAVB is concerned that a failure to reach an agreement at these agencies will impact on the ability to recruit and retain experienced clinicians, leading in turn to ballooning waiting lists and poor health outcomes for patients,” said ADAVB President Dr Kevin Morris.

“Some of the community health centres that are refusing to sign-on to the agreement have some of the longest waiting times for general dental care in the state, including Merri Health with a 33 month wait, IPC Health with a 27.8 month wait and cohealth with a 23.3 month wait. The average waiting time in Victoria is currently 20.7 months.”

ADAVB has been a strong supporter of the public dental sector, and our ongoing advocacy has helped to secure significant additional funding to tackle waiting lists and improve access to care.

The community health agencies who have not yet signed on to the agreement are listed below along with their waiting times for general dental care (as at June 2018):

- Sunbury Community Health – 36.3 months
- Merri Health – 33 months
- DPV Health – 23.8 months (Dianella) and 30.6 months (Plenty Valley)
- IPC Health – 27.8 months

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- Inspiro Community Health Service – 26.6 months
- Banyule Community Health – 24.2 months
- cohealth – 23.3 months
- Your Community Health – 22.7 months
- EACH – 22.3 months
- Access Health & Community – 16 months
- Connect Health & Community – 12.6 months
- Star Health – 11 months

Eligible dentists working at the above-mentioned community health agencies will be participating in the 24-hour stop-work on Monday 4 February. Colleagues, families and friends are encouraged to support our community health dentists by attending a public rally to be held on the same day on the steps of Parliament House from 12-1pm. General public and media representatives are also welcome to attend.

Interviews:

Dr Kevin Morris, ADAVB President
A/Prof Matt Hopcraft, ADAVB CEO

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- [Data obtained by ADAVB about preventable hospitalisations](#)
- [Data obtained by ADAVB about public dental care waiting times](#)
- AIHW 2018: Oral Health and Dental Care in Australia: web report 19 November 2018. Cat No. 231. Canberra: AIHW. Available at [Oral health and dental care in Australia](#)

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