



Kevin Humphries MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Healthy Lifestyles
Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

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**INCREASED PAIN FOR NSW DENTAL PATIENTS
FOLLOWING FEDERAL GOVT REFORM**

NSW dental patients with chronic disease could be forced to forgo vital treatment following the Gillard Government's decision to close the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme (CDDS), Minister for Healthy Lifestyles Kevin Humphries warned today.

Mr Humphries said he had serious concerns that the decision to close the scheme may leave some patients in need of urgent of treatment languishing on public dental waiting lists.

"With the Gillard Government's full package of unfunded dental reforms not expected to be implemented for what could be a number of years, dental patients with chronic disease now face a situation where they could potentially not have access to funding for vital treatment," Mr Humphries said.

"There is no doubt that this decision jeopardises the health of those most in need, including the elderly and those with additional health needs.

"The Federal Health Minister Tanya Plibersek has been unable to explain what will happen to patients with chronic conditions who will not be eligible and will not have access to these vital services, and I call on her to do so."

Mr Humphries said that under the dental reforms proposed by the Gillard Government, NSW stands to lose funding now provided for NSW residents under the CDDS.

"The CDDS has provided a significant investment into public dental care in NSW that will now be removed and I have concerns around the public system's capacity to provide adequate care without an alternate system in place," Mr Humphries said.

"Rather than closing the scheme the NSW Government believes there were opportunities to revise and improve it, but yet again the Gillard Government has put politics above the wellbeing of the people of this State."

Mr Humphries said the Gillard Government must also explain how they intend to pay for the full reforms given some are unfunded, not due to start until after the next election and are part of a host of programs threatening to blow out of the Federal Government's budget.

"The Gillard Government has a poor track record of successfully implementing their reform agenda, and I can't see that changing," Mr Humphries said.