



## FDI DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT

### National Health Policy with the Inclusion of Oral Health

Revised version adopted by the General Assembly: 1998, Barcelona, Spain

Submitted for adoption to the General Assembly: September 2018, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Final Draft to GA

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2 **CONTEXT**  
3 The new definition of oral health<sup>1</sup> adopted by the FDI World Dental Federation General  
4 Assembly in 2016 has laid the framework to allow the profession to reflect on what oral  
5 health encompasses and its implication for national oral health policies. Further, this  
6 definition, which was approved by consensus by FDI constituents, favours the inclusion  
7 of oral health in all health-related policies<sup>2</sup>.
- 8 **SCOPE**  
9 National health policy needs to reflect that oral health is a fundamental human right and  
10 is inseparable from general health. National health policy needs to facilitate the  
11 inclusion of oral health in all health-related policies<sup>3</sup>.
- 12 **DEFINITIONS**  
13 Health policy refers to decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve  
14 health goals within a society, which includes oral health. Oral health has been defined  
15 by FDI as being multifaceted and includes the ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, feel,  
16 chew, swallow, and convey a range of emotions through facial expressions with  
17 confidence and without pain, discomfort, or disease of the craniofacial complex<sup>4</sup>. With  
18 the formation of a concise health policy, a clear vision for the future can be established  
19 with targets and points of reference for the short and medium term. Further, an explicit  
20 health policy enables priorities to be outlined with the expected roles of different  
21 stakeholders, concurrently builds consensus and informs people<sup>5</sup>.
- 22  
23 **PRINCIPLES**  
24 Member National Dental Associations (NDAs) should become involved in all political  
25 and legislative processes and decisions regarding matters of oral health, systemic  
26 health related to oral health, promotion, prevention and care. In utilizing a common  
27 definition of oral health, stakeholders can be brought together to influence and shape  
28 parameters of healthcare systems (policies, research, education and reimbursement  
29 models) and to shape the future of the dental profession.

30

## 31 **POLICY**

32 FDI supports all professional, political, legislative and strategic decisions to improve oral  
33 health in all policies.

34 Stakeholders and public health authorities together with member NDAs:

- 35 • should offer advice and support in relation to the planning of oral health and related  
36 measures;
- 37 • can help to promote within their national safety net system the principle of the  
38 provision of basic oral healthcare as absolutely necessary and a fundamental human  
39 right;
- 40 • should promote a closer dentist/patient relationship on the basis of free choice of  
41 practitioner;
- 42 • should aim for diagnostic and therapeutic freedom as a principal aspect of dental  
43 practice, where clinically necessary and evidence-based treatment measures are  
44 chosen based on the individual needs, demands and requirements of the patients,  
45 free from any outside influence;
- 46 • should aim to prevent the establishment of profit-oriented corporations/entities that  
47 disallow the independent and ethical practice of our own dental profession;
- 48 • should promote the principle of confidentiality and data protection, particularly  
49 regarding modern information-communication technology and worldwide information  
50 exchange;
- 51 • should promote or establish meaningful data collection systems with consistent  
52 methodologies for oral health surveillance;
- 53 • should work to improve the distribution of the oral health work force in urban-rural  
54 settings;
- 55 • shall promote and ensure the availability of the oral health work force in all levels of  
56 micro/macro health settings. Analysis of the potential barriers to national health  
57 policies is crucial.

58

## 59 **KEYWORDS**

60 Definition of oral health; national health policy; legislation; healthcare

## 61 **DISCLAIMER**

62 The information in this policy statement was based on the best scientific evidence  
63 available at the time. It may be interpreted to reflect prevailing cultural sensitivities and  
64 socio-economic constraints.  
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## 66 **REFERENCES**

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