[Name of President/Prime Minister/Minister of Health/Minister of Finance/Chief Dental Officer etc.]

[Address]

[Insert date]

Dear [add recipient’s name],

I am writing on behalf of the [add name of National Dental Association] and FDI World Dental Federation (FDI) concerning the importance of consideration of mental health and well-being for the members of the dental team and oral health professionals in national actions and health policy agenda.

[Acknowledge their previous leadership on mental health if applicable and/or insert country-specific data on the burden of mental health in healthcare professionals/oral health professionals if applicable.]

Mental health is key for our general health and well-being and,, consequently, a basic human right.

Workplaces can contribute factors affecting the mental health and well-being of people, which is why the International Labour Organization (ILO) advocates for the promotion of mental health and well-being in the workplace by focusing on the prevention of psychosocial risks. This is key to occupational safety and health[[1]](#footnote-1).

Oral health professionals and dental teams are often exposed to different stressors in the workplace, resulting in severe mental health issues such as burnout and an increase in unhealthy addictive behaviours. Sustained stress can lead to consequences such as lowered immune response and physical impacts such as muscle aches and pains. On the other side, burnout is an extreme stress reaction that includes high levels of exhaustion, cynicism/depersonalisation (lack of empathy) and inefficiency or reduced personal accomplishment. These situations could impact on their ability to perform to the full extent of their education and training.

The landmark decisions of Member States at the 75th Session of the World Health Assembly and International Labour Conference reaffirm the obligations of governments and employers to protect and safeguard the health and care workforce.[[2]](#footnote-2) [[3]](#footnote-3)FDI believes in the importance of having specific policies that address the dental health professionals’ mental health and well-being in a national setting.

We strongly encourage you to consider this issue and prioritise actions to promote the mental health of dental teams in the national health agenda and to collaborate with other ministries and relevant bodies to implement such actions . Therefore, we kindly ask you to develop the following:

* National mental health surveys for healthcare workers
* Inclusion of mental health and stress management in the dental curriculum
* Implementation of training and Continuous Education (CE) programmes on stress management and awareness for oral health professionals

[FDI has developed resources](https://www.fdiworlddental.org/hsdw) to shed more light on the risk of mental illness among dentists and dental teams. [add name of National Dental Association] will be happy to have further discussions on the matter and to be part of any working group addressing the issue.

Yours sincerely,

*Insert your signature/Name/Title/Organization*

*Insert your contact details*

**About** [Insert name of National Dental Association]

[Provide a brief description of National Dental Association]

**About FDI World Dental Federation**

FDI World Dental Federation (FDI) is an international, membership-based organization that serves as the main representative body for more than 1 million dentists worldwide, active in some 200 National Dental Associations and specialist groups in close to 130 countries. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, FDI’s mission is to lead the world to optimal oral health.

1. International Labour Organization (ILO). Safety and health at work. 2022. [cited on 29 August 2022] Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-brussels/documents/publication/wcms_849789.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. World Health Assembly 75 Decision WHA75.71 [cited 14 October 2022] Available from <https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA75/A75_R17-en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. International Labour Conference. International Labour Conference adds safety and health to Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Geneva: International Labour Conference, 110th Session; 10 June 2022 [cited 14 October 2022] Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_848132/lang--en/index.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)