FDI Statement delivered at INB 4 (Feb 27 – March 3, 2023)

FDI's comments on the Zero draft of the WHO CA+ for the consideration of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body at its fourth meeting

The FDI World Dental Federation (FDI), is the global voice of the dental profession, and represents over one million dentists. FDI thanks the co-chairs of the INB for the opportunity to deliver this statement.

As many Member States have rightly noted, health and care workers are at the frontline in emergency situations. WHO reported that during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, 23% of front-line healthcare workers worldwide suffered depression and anxiety and 39% suffered insomnia. Furthermore, medical professions are at higher risk of suicide in all parts of the world.[i]

We welcome the recommendation to "safeguard, protect, invest in and sustain a skilled, trained, competent and committed health and care workforce…" – in line with the previously adopted WHA resolution 74.14 and 75.17.

However, we strongly urge Member States to recognize that many of them are still on a long, slow process to recovery. Therefore, we recommend that first draft of the WHO CA+ should address the following:

1. Adequate support to ensure recovery from the mental health strain and exhaustion imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on health and care workers.
2. The challenge of persistent violence against health and care workforce.
3. Engaging representatives of health and care workers in the development of national plans, programs and priorities for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. For example, Dentists have specific expertise in antimicrobial stewardship that can strengthen national infection prevention and control plans.

We remind all stakeholders that ensuring a healthy and well-protected health workforce is critical to future pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

Thank you.

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[i] https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/occupational-health--health-workers