

# Fourth UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health

## **Panel 2: Reshaping and strengthening health systems and all forms of financing to meet the needs of people living with and at risk of noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions.**

The International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research and the FDI World Dental Federation, representing over 10,000 researchers and 1 million dentists respectively, thank the Chair for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion.

As governments work to reshape and strengthen health systems to respond to the NCD and mental health crisis, it is imperative that oral health be included as a core component of this transformation. Therefore, we commend governments for recognizing oral health as a key component of the NCD and mental health agenda in the draft Political Declaration. We urge that this oral health language be retained in the final version.

Oral diseases, affecting 3.7 billion people, share common risk factors with other major NCDs, tobacco, sugar, and alcohol, and perpetuate cycles of poverty, disability, and inequity when left unaddressed. We urge governments to align financing strategies with the WHO Global Oral Health Action Plan, and to ensure oral health services are included in essential benefit packages. Integration into primary care, especially prevention and early treatment, is critical.

Addressing the social and commercial determinants of health, including through taxes on harmful products, is essential to reducing NCD risk and generating resources for health promotion. This includes targeting poverty, corporate influence, and environments that undermine healthy choices.

We also call for equity-driven financing. Those living in poverty, rural communities, and humanitarian settings carry the highest burden of oral disease with the least access to care. Reforms must close, not widen these gaps.

Investment in oral health research, data systems, and innovation pipelines is urgently needed to inform cost-effective, integrated care models. Oral health professionals must be included as core partners in multidisciplinary care and policy planning.

There is no health for all without oral health for all. We urge you to protect and advance these critical inclusions in the Political Declaration.

Thank you.

**Duration: 2 mins 30 secs.**

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