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Media release

NZDA supports dentists' and doctors' strike action

The NZ Dental Association is standing in support of the more than 6,000 senior hospital doctors and dentists who are in the midst a 48-hour strike across New Zealand.

While the Association recognises disruption to patients as a result will be significant, the strike highlights long-standing concerns about the sustainability of the dental workforce and the risks to patient access to care.

"The pressures on our dentists are unsustainable and have been worsening for years," says NZDA President Dr David Excell.

"This strike is a signal that the system is at breaking point. Dentists want to provide the best care possible, but without urgent workforce planning, patients will continue to face delays and reduced access."

The dentist-to-population ratio has declined 4.9% in the 12 years to 2024, leaving fewer dentists available per New Zealander, and dentists are now working 18.9% more hours per week on average.

While the 2024 Health Workforce Plan by Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora did identify the need for more dental specialists in training, much more needs to be done to adequately address dental workforce issues.

NZDA has warned that unless government and health agencies respond with targeted strategies for training, recruitment, and retention, New Zealanders will face worsening oral health inequities.

The Association's [Workforce Roadmap](#) sets out clear recommendations for sustainable solutions. Without implementing these steps, Dr Excell warns patients will face worsening inequities in access to oral health services.

"Patients are already waiting longer for treatment. Unless we act now, these delays will grow.

"This strike is about protecting the future of dental care in New Zealand as much as it is about supporting our dentists."

ENDS

For further information, visit roadmap.nzda.org.nz or contact James Paul on 022 514 0716