New Zealand Oral Health Association
Te Ohu Pūniho Ora o Aotearoa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
19th November 2025

Te Ohu Pūniho Ora o Aotearoa – New Zealand Oral Health Association (NZOHA) welcomes Pharmac decision to fund silver diamine fluoride

The NZOHA welcomes Pharmac's decision to fund silver diamine fluoride (SDF) for use in public-hospital and community oral-health services, effective 1 December 2025. The decision marks a significant step toward better access and equity in oral health care.

"SDF is a proven, minimally invasive treatment that halts dental decay and offers real alternatives to drilling and filling — especially for children, older adults and people who find conventional dental care difficult," said Anna Holyoake, President of NZOHA. "We applaud Pharmac's action and look forward to seeing the benefits for patients and practitioners alike."

Why this matters:

SDF provides a less invasive option for treating tooth decay — reducing pain, anxiety and the need for hospital-based general-anaesthetic procedures.

The funding decision helps address access and equity issues for tamariki Māori, Pacific communities and other underserved groups. Oral health therapists and dental therapists are the cornerstone of the Community Oral Health Service, delivering most preventive and early intervention care across Aotearoa New Zealand.

For members of NZOHA (oral health therapists, dental hygienists and dental therapists) this funding supports their role in delivering preventive and early-intervention care, aligning with our mission to empower practitioners and improve oral-health outcomes. For too long, access to simple and effective preventive treatments has depended on postcode, cost and workforce resourcing. This decision helps close these gaps.

NZOHA's commitment:
NZOHA will work closely with our members and stakeholders to:

- Support the rollout of SDF in eligible services and settings.
- Promote practitioner education, training and best-practice use of SDF.
- Advocate for broader future access, including community-based settings and private practice.
- Monitor impact and ensure equity-driven implementation across Aotearoa.

"This is a milestone for preventive oral health in New Zealand," added Anna. "We now need to ensure that the policy change turns into real-world outcomes — more healthy smiles and fewer barriers to care."

About NZOHA
Te Ohu Pūniho Ora o Aotearoa – NZOHA is the unified professional association for dental therapists, dental hygienists and oral health therapists across New Zealand. We provide advocacy, professional development, collaboration and research to strengthen the oral-health workforce and advance excellent, equitable care for all communities.

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