

NZOHA Media Release

16 May 2022

**The NZOHA supports industrial action by the Public Sector Oral Health Therapists and Dental Therapists.**

Te Ohu Pūniho Ora o Aotearoa – The New Zealand Oral Health Association (NZOHA) is supporting our members in the Community Oral Health Service (COHS) by taking industrial action by members of the Public Service Association calling for better working conditions, more recognition of oral health and better wages.

NZOHA President Anna Holyoake says members of the NZOHA are the backbone of the COHS, and without oral health therapists and dental therapists working hard every day in an already constrained service, tamariki and rangatahi oral health in Aotearoa would be a lot worse off.

“Our members are sick and tired of not having the recognition they deserve for all the hard work they do in trying to get the oral health of our children under control in Aotearoa. DHBS need to hurry and come to the table with a better offer of pay for them”

“New graduate oral health therapists coming into the COHS get pennies, 80 cents more than the minimum wage after completing a professional qualification degree at University. They come out with big student loans and are offered 80 cents more than the minimum wage. Name me another health profession where the pay is so low, I do not think there is one” said Anna.

“The starting wage for a new graduate oral health therapist in the COHS is insulting. Our members do not go to work in the COHS for the money, but to help the children. Unfortunately love for the job does not pay the bills, that is why the COHS is losing clinicians to private practice” says Samuel Carrington, NZOHA Executive member.

“The government needs to come to the table and offer our COHS clinicians the pay they deserve. It is completely unsustainable to continue with the status quo as it will be our children who suffer. And that is unacceptable” said Samuel.