

Media Release

4 March 2022

NZ Oral Health Association Supports DHB Members Striking Today

Te Ohu Pūniho Ora o Aotearoa – The New Zealand Oral Health Association (NZOHA) supports our members who will be joining the nationwide strike of allied, public health, scientific and technical professionals who work in District Health Boards (DHBs) after 15 months of unsuccessful negotiations.

Oral health therapists and dental therapists are the pioneers for treating child and adolescent children in Aotearoa. Their hard work in the Community Oral Health Service throughout Aotearoa has gone unappreciated by the DHBs for far too long. Many oral health therapists are now choosing to work in private practices because they are getting over double the hourly rate the DHBs are paying.

“It is shocking to us as an organisation that our members are undervalued in their pay. Our members have formal qualifications from Universities, and they start in the DHB on less than \$25 an hour. The pay inequities need to be eliminated immediately. The DHBs need to recognise the hard mahi dental and oral health therapists play in being a mid-level dental providers and the important dental prevention they provide” says NZOHA President Anna Holyoake.

“Currently we are seeing massive arrears in all areas throughout Aotearoa for basic examinations. The underinvestment in child and adolescent oral health coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic just added to the workload for our members. Dental and oral health therapists are overworked, undervalued and understaffed. We stand with them today in solidarity for better working conditions, more resourcing and more recognition as cornerstone allied health professionals.”

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