

Head Office

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Committed to Dental Excellence

15 March 2012

Her Excellency, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil,
The President of India
Rashtrapati Bhavan
New Delhi – 110001

Respected President,

The Indian Dental Association (IDA), the custodian of oral health in the country, is the largest recognized body of dental professionals in India. IDA has a national presence and works through its 29 state and over 300 local branches spread across the country to achieve its mission of optimal oral health for all in the country and provision of quality dental services. Your Excellency is well aware that oral health is integral to overall health of the community.

The Strategy of Prevention

As the guardian of oral health in the country, IDA has been following a strategy of prevention of oral diseases. Oral health is a state of being free from chronic oral diseases like oral cancer, a preventable disease that use of tobacco causes. As a part of its social responsibility, IDA has set up Oral Cancer Foundation to facilitate early detection and treatment and launched the Tobacco Intervention Initiative Centres to aid tobacco cessation. There are over 300 Centres functioning across the country to facilitate early detection of cancerous lesions and aiding tobacco cessation.

Various other oral health initiatives like Child Dental Centre to prevent dental decay among children, National Oral Health Programme to remove regional disparities in oral health in the country, to name only a few, have had encouraging results. Nonetheless, growing use of tobacco and the changing lifestyle among the people have been posing a threat to oral health and the national health index. Despite initiating actions to empower the community and create awareness among the people about oral health and its importance and the dangers to life of tobacco use, in the absence of a total ban on tobacco use, IDA's efforts have not met with the desired success.

It may not be out of place to mention here that IDA has been associating with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in various measures aimed at improving the oral health scenario in the country.

Development of Database of Dental Personnel Resources

Your Excellency will be happy to know that the Indian Dental Association had been involved in developing a proper database of dental personnel resources in the country as a follow-up of a workshop on Dental Personnel Resources Management conducted under the aegis of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. This software has now been installed at the Maharashtra Chapter of State Dental Council. It helps the Dental Council of India and its affiliates at the States suitably plan management of resources to avoid skewed distribution and make effective and efficient use of dental health personnel. It also helps the Ministry to assess the dental personnel resources available in the country, their distribution and placement, their adequacy or otherwise.

IDA-NABH Collaborative Venture

Provision of quality service among healthcare providers is the essential need of the hour with the rampant mushrooming of dental clinics across the country. There is a wide gulf in clinical standards seen in urban-rural dental clinics and in the procedures and methods employed in the treatment of patients. IDA in association with National Accreditation Board for Hospitals (NABH) & Healthcare Providers have developed certain basic quality standards to be followed in the provision of dental healthcare services to ensure safety and effectiveness of the services rendered. Dental Clinics adopting these quality standards will be termed IDA Accredited Clinics.

Oral health problems are directly linked to our life styles. Hence effective intervention in lifestyle is the key to oral health promotion. Tobacco cessation initiative is one such endeavour, where the Indian Dental Association has been playing a significant role in educating the public on the dangers that tobacco use poses to the health of the community.

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Much as IDA has been playing its role of improving and safeguarding oral health and hygiene in the country, its services could be more effectively utilised by the government in more ways than one.

We would therefore submit the following for your Excellency's kind consideration and necessary action by your government.

1. National Rural Health Mission

You are aware that the Union Health Ministry has prepared a huge plan against Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) for the 12th Five Year Plan. The programme to control cancer (oral cancer included) has been given the highest consideration. Among the major NCDs that will be covered under the 12th Plan include, among others, oral **cancer, fluorosis and ortho-dental disorders**. As dental professionals, these are of growing concern to IDA.

It is our humble submission that involvement of Indian Dental Association in the implementation of National Rural Health Mission is considered by your government to take care of oral and related disorders.

2. Separate Department for Dental Services

While Oral Health is important to overall health of the community, there is no separate department to exclusively deal with dental services. Oral health problems being directly linked to our own life styles, and lifestyle changes being rampant, it would be in the fitness of things, if a separate department is set up with a Joint Director responsible for its function under the Department of Health Services, as in the case of Defence Dental Services.

3. Establishment of a separate Oral Health Wing

Amongst the various branches of medicine which have been recognized and listed as members in the National Council for Clinical Establishment are Allopathy, Ayurveda, Homeopathy and Unani. However, there is no oral health branch recognized. Oral diseases have been increasing owing to lifestyle changes and it is high time, it is submitted for your consideration, that an oral health wing is established in the Health Ministry to take care of oral diseases like oral cancer, gum diseases, dental caries, etc.

4. Encouraging Public Private Partnership in NRHM

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are a major cause of death globally, killing more than 36 million people in 2008. Though they are non-infectious, NCDs accounted for 53% of all deaths in India in 2008. Considering the high cost of medicines and longer duration of treatment, NCDs constitute a greater financial burden to low income groups in the country. The Indian Dental Association has been advocating for quite some time inclusion of oral diseases in NCDs because of common risk factors.

IDA has a wide network of branches across the country. As a part of our social obligation, State and Local Branches of the Indian Dental Association may be associated with programmes in a manner that involves promoting public private partnership in the implementation of NCDs as a part of National Rural Health Mission programmes.

5. Representation of IDA in Dental Council of India

Dental Council of India regulates the dental education and the dental profession throughout the country. Various State Governments, Universities, Dental Colleges, Central Government, etc., are represented in the Council. The Indian Dental Association, the recognized body of dental professionals, is conspicuous by its absence. It is submitted that representation of the Indian Dental Association in the Dental Council of India may kindly be considered.

6. Representation of IDA in Medical Device Regulatory Authority of India

Healthcare sector in India has been growing in importance. The Medical Device Regulatory Authority of India ensures the safety of the public in the use of medical devices by maintaining control relating to the quality, safety, efficacy and availability of medical devices used, whether produced in India or elsewhere. In the context of oral healthcare gaining great importance, representation of the Indian Dental Association in MDRA may be considered to take care of the oral health segment.

7. Representation of IDA in National Council for Clinical Establishment

Amongst the Organizations/Associations which have been listed as members in the National Council for Clinical Establishment are representatives of the Indian Medical Association and the Indian System of Medicine Association. The Indian Dental Association, which is the largest body of dental professionals in the country, is not mentioned amongst the members of the National Council. Non-representation of the largest body of dental professionals in the Council for Clinical Establishment will be prejudicial to the entire

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dental fraternity as other branches of medicine like ayurveda, unani, homeopathy and siddha. It is therefore requested that suitable steps may be initiated to give representation to the Indian Dental Association in this Council.

8. Oral Health Adviser to Health Ministry

It may not be out of place to mention here that, in view of the growing incidence of oral diseases and their links with systemic diseases, there is the need for a permanent Adviser on Oral Health matters to the Ministry of Health as in the case of general Medicine.

9. Need for National Oral Health Policy

Your Excellency is aware that oral health is an important component of general health. Poor oral health combined with other risk factors may contribute to cardiovascular problems. That oral diseases have to be given adequate weightage in our national health programmes needs no added emphasis. However, there is no separate oral health policy to take care of oral healthcare. The Association had prepared and submitted a draft oral health policy to the government earlier and will only be happy and willing to do the exercise once again if asked by your government. We request you to kindly recommend to the government formulation of an oral health policy.

10. Representation in NCHRH

The National Council for Human Resource in Health (NCHRH) is an overarching regulatory body for health and allied sectors. The Council prescribes standards with a view to having proper planning and co-coordinated development of medical and allied health education throughout the country. It also helps maintain national live electronic register of medical and allied health professionals. It is humbly submitted that representation of the Indian Dental Association in the Council may be considered.

We would be happy if you would kindly consider tendering appropriate advice to the Union Government to ensure that the issues raised by the Indian Dental Association are given appropriate consideration by the government.

With respectful regards,



Dr Ashok Dhoble
Hon Secretary General