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*Committed to Dental Excellence*

03 October, 2016

Shri Narendra Modi  
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India  
Government of India  
Prime Minister's Office  
South Block, Raisina Hill  
New Delhi 110001

**Respected Sir,**

**Subject: HASTENING TOTAL HEALTH REVOLUTION IN INDIA**

**Overview**

The government's emphasis on national health assurance, which will provide universal healthcare and comprehensive health insurance cover for the poor, is well-founded. Universal health assurance is unavoidable in our country where 80 - 85 per cent of the healthcare expenses are borne by the people. We also share your concern about diseases like tuberculosis, hepatitis (five main types A, B, C, D, and E), dengue fever, malaria, pneumonia, typhoid, etc., not to speak of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, cancer and HIV / AIDS where India is ranked third among countries with highest HIV infected patients. **All these diseases are preventable and a conscious effort is needed to launch a preventive strategy through awareness creation.**

Various programmes are being implemented to address these issues and ameliorate the conditions. There is no doubt that improvement in the national health scenario is an essential and necessary condition to enhance productivity and accelerate growth. **We greatly appreciate your sincere efforts to improve the overall health scenario in the country by 2020. You can count on our support in creating a strong and well-run health system supported by well trained healthcare personnel. Ensuring effective deployment and efficient utilisation of their services will make total health for all available, accessible and affordable.**

**Oral health integral to Overall Health**

Speaking of health, oral health is an integral part of overall health and quality of life. Dental care is very expensive and is not covered by insurance, which obviously leads to its neglect. The Indian Dental Association (IDA) on its part has been implementing quite a few oral health programmes to educate people about the importance of oral health and hygiene. Pursuance of a strategy of prevention is primarily aimed at securing its goal of optimal oral health for all in the country. These projects and programmes promote not only oral health and hygiene amongst the people but also the overall development of oral healthcare sector in the country to promote improved health index of the nation envisioned by your government.

### Health inequities

You are well aware, Sir, that there are inequities in health outcomes on the back of regional disparities in health coupled with lack of awareness of oral hygiene. Oral health inequity and inequitable access to oral health services contribute to overall health inequity of the population. And it further worsens the socio-economic inequity.

### Need for joint action

It is true that the task of provision of healthcare for all cannot be undertaken by the government alone. Other agencies in the healthcare field must also share the responsibility. **We need to bring the various agencies involved in the provision of healthcare on a single platform to ensure effective implementation and efficient monitoring.** All the stakeholders, viz., the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the concerned health ministries of the state governments, government hospitals and health institutions in the private sector and non-government organizations with their enviable outreach, have to embark on a common strategy of prevention and treatment of diseases. The "Swatch Bharat Abhiyan" initiative will add supplementary benefits in the form of improved national health by enhancing personal and environmental hygiene that leads to building a strong and healthy nation.

### Strategy of prevention

IDA has been following a strategy of prevention of oral diseases. **Oral diseases are absolutely preventable.** This is done by organizing dental check up and awareness camps and implementing programmes related to oral cancer prevention and tobacco cessation. Such camps help educate people about the importance of oral hygiene and the measures employed for disease prevention. The aim is to reduce the incidence of oral diseases, particularly oral cancer. Campaigns against tobacco use have had favourable impact on its cessation.

### Need of the hour

To improve health, what's needed is the availability of a system that provides **authentic data of healthcare professionals at a point of time, state-wise, district-wise, gender-wise, speciality-wise.** **The Indian Dental Association (IDA) has developed a software that provides authentic data of its dental resources personnel.** We have also developed a database for oral disease prevalence in the country.

The web-based software developed by IDA offers a digital system that provides authentic information of dental professionals in the country at a point of time state-wise, district-wise, gender-wise, speciality-wise. It can be accessed by all the stakeholders concerned, viz., the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, State Governments, Dental Council of India, and the State Dental Councils. The system has been implemented by a few State Dental Councils. It has facilitated **effective utilisation and efficient deployment of dental personnel resources in the country and avoid areas of saturation or otherwise to improve dentist-population ratio.** The system developed also **enables concurrent monitoring by the Health Ministry for purposes of formulation of, or changes in, oral health policy.**

### The challenge

The challenge is to ensure delivery of quality oral healthcare services in an efficient and affordable manner. This called for a strategy to **train the dental workforce with appropriate skills and cultural competence to adequately and efficiently provide dental care** to a population growing in size and diversity. **The software developed can be utilised for continuing education to keep the oral healthcare professionals abreast of advancements in dental technologies and therapeutic procedures.** Clinical procedure standardisation and ensuring proper ethical standards, which IDA is working on, are intended to introduce uniform standards of care.

### How can IDA assist the Government?

A similar software reflecting the database of healthcare professionals in respect of other fields of medicine can be developed with minor modifications since the basic structure is already available. It's only a matter of months. **Such a reliable database in respect of healthcare professionals, their number and specialisations state-wise, district-wise and gender-wise, in effect, will help effective deployment of healthcare professionals to combat the diseases in a given timeframe.** It will also facilitate overall coordination and monitoring of the implementation of national health policy by the Health Ministry and other stakeholders. IDA, as a part of its social responsibility, is prepared to assist the government in this regard in its effort to improve the health of the people through a strategy of universal healthcare to usher in a new dawn in overall healthcare.

This, I am quite positive, would throw light on the usefulness of the software as an effective tool for monitoring health inequalities by the government enabling corrective action.

### Software Presentation to the PM

If the government so desires, a presentation of the features of the web-based software developed by IDA can be made to the Prime Minister at a date and time convenient. The software mechanism would throw light on the usefulness of the software as an effective tool for effective and efficient deployment of oral healthcare service providers.

With respectful regards,



Dr Ashok Dhoble  
Hon Secretary General