FDI POLICY STATEMENT

Basic Responsibilities and Rights of Dentists

Adopted by the FDI General Assembly:
Octobre 2007, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Dentists have broad responsibilities that are not restricted to their legal obligations but also include ethical obligations arising from their commitments to patients, to society and to professional ideals. This statement does not intend to cover the legal responsibilities of dentists but rather will focus on their ethical responsibilities. Interpretation of such responsibilities may vary from one country to another; however commonly shared moral values and ethical responsibilities include the duty to:

- recognize, promote and uphold fundamental human rights and the rights of their patients;
- represent, defend and advocate for both the oral health needs and best interests of patients and the public;
- provide safe, quality, competent and fair oral healthcare to every patient;
- improve the oral health, and contribute to the general health and well-being of individual patients and the public at large; and
- maintain the role, good reputation and dignity of the profession.

Strong links exist between the responsibilities and the rights of dentists, including the right of professional autonomy, self-regulation and clinical freedom. These professional rights exist not only for the benefit of the dentists, but also enable dentists to provide quality and ethical oral health care for all members of the community, and to meet their professional responsibilities and commitments. When these professional rights are under threat, there may be a significant risk to the maintenance of professional standards.

As with their responsibilities, the interpretation of the professional rights of dentists may vary from country to country. However, in all circumstances this must be:

- in the best interests of individual patients and the public; and
- in accordance with the professional and ethical codes, and the credibility, of the dental profession.

Dentists must also recognize and comply with those situations where professional responsibilities should take precedence over their professional rights.

The constant change affecting both the dental profession and the public necessitates regular evaluation of the professional rights and responsibilities of dentists to meet these

challenges in the future.

KEYWORDS

Ethics, legislation, profession

REFERENCES

Background documents that have particularly been developed by the Dental Practice Committee in conjunction with the draft FDI statement consist of three articles (in English) published in the International Dental Journal:

- *The responsibilities and rights of dental professionals. 1. Introduction. International Dental Journal (2006) 2/06, 56, 109-111.*
- *The responsibilities and rights of dental professionals. 2. Professional responsibilities. International Dental Journal (2006) 3/06 56, 168-170*
- *The responsibilities and rights of dental professionals. 3. Professional rights. International Dental Journal (2006) 4/06, 56, 224-226*