

# WFPHA Maternal and Child Oral Health Initiative



## Endorsement Statement

Good oral health of mothers is essential for their overall health and their young children. A mother's oral health status, oral health knowledge, oral health literacy, attitudes, behavior, and socioeconomic status influence children's health as important determinants of childhood caries. Thus, the life course approach focusing on cross-generational intervention is critical. What matters the most is **to create a system of health care and health promotion for mothers and children to achieve oral health and oral health equity**. When children grow in an environment with adequate family and community support that promote a proactive attitude towards oral health, their overall health, wellbeing, and development thrives. Such an environment nurtures and encourages optimal oral hygiene practices and healthy diets through caregivers and mothers from the early stage of life.

However, there are multiple challenges in accessing dental care for women and children globally. Cost of care, lack of health literacy, and limited access to dental facilities and dental workforce availability are some of these barriers. These challenges disproportionately affect women and children in communities with limited resources and a lack of health care systems. Therefore, it is critical that oral health is positioned as an integral part of primary health and antenatal health, focused on prevention. The new norm needs to be a caries-free mouth.

To achieve oral health equity, especially for maternal and child populations, the World Federation of Public Health Associations launches its Maternal and Child Oral Health Initiative. Our message is clear: **We believe women are the key change agents that secure and improve the oral health of their children and family, and we call for action by health professionals and policymakers to improve maternal oral health by integrating oral health care into the existing and future antenatal health system.**

WFPHA will maximize currently existing maternal oral health resources, including health outcomes measures, clinical guidelines, and national policies, to provide technical assistance to WFPHA public health association members and other public health entities. WFPHA will also collaborate with endorsing international entities listed below, to promote maternal and child oral health agendas and design collaborative efforts to promote oral health of women and children.

**We endorse the WFPHA Maternal and Child Oral Health Initiative to promote maternal and child oral health through our current mission and priorities and seek opportunities to integrate oral health into existing and future primary and antenatal health systems for women in pre-pregnancy (preconception), pregnancy, and post-pregnancy stage of life.**

Entity Name: Humble Smile Foundation

*'I confirm that **Humble Smile Foundation** endorses the WFPHA Maternal and Child Oral Health Initiative. I confirm that I have authority to speak on behalf of the organization.'*

