

# A FOCUS ON GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH: NYU Dentistry's WHO Collaborating Center for Quality-improvement and Evidence-based Dentistry

World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centers (WHOCC) are designated by the World Health Organization to establish an international collaborative network that supports the WHO's work at the national, regional, and international levels. The Department of Epidemiology & Health Promotion at NYU College of Dentistry hosts and supports the WHOCC with resources and staff. It is one of only 10 Collaborating Centers on oral health in the world and the only one in the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), comprising the Americas and the Caribbean.

## **Our Mandate**

Our WHOCC focuses on:

- Designing innovative surveillance systems for oral diseases, equity, quality of life, and the impact of preventive interventions.
- Guidance for translating and implementing evidence on prevention, control, and treatment of oral diseases to inform programming and policy.
- Evidence review, identification of effective interventions, "best buys," and dissemination of best practices for the prevention and control of oral diseases across the lifespan.

## **Vision for Oral Health in the Region and Beyond**

We seek to achieve health equity whereby all people have equal access to, equal quality of, and equal outcomes of disease prevention and healthcare. We strive for excellence and frontline leadership in science, teaching, health policy and public health practice by using epidemiology and analysis tools to inform our approaches for assessing clinical health, patient-centered outcomes, quality of life, policy, legislation, and economic impact.

## Areas of Action

- We are leading the largest school-based caries prevention program in US history, serving close to 30,000 students, and testing multiple innovative, aerosol-free, cost-effective interventions. These interventions are based on national guidelines and are “best buys” in the U.S.
- We support global policy initiatives that include the WHO Global Oral Health Strategy (2022-2031) and the addition of caries preventive and treatment agents to the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines. We co-edit the WHO Global Oral Health Report and co-lead The Lancet Commission on Global Oral Health.
- We support countries in the Americas, and globally, with surveillance and epidemiological studies, capacity building of health managers and policy development.
- We developed and published foundational guidance on essential dental care and operational procedures for oral healthcare in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This work led to the WHO interim dental service guidance under COVID-19.
- We advocate for oral health on the foremost political agendas. We organized three side-events in connection with health-related meetings of the United Nations General Assembly.

## Our Collaborative Agenda

The WHOCC regularly communicates and collaborates with national and international institutions that share a similar vision and mission. Our collaborative work includes joint training, research, dissemination and implementation, policy development and assessment, publications, and joint resource mobilization.

## Leadership

The Department of Epidemiology & Health Promotion at NYU Dentistry supports the WHOCC with a team of seasoned oral health experts trained in public health and dentistry, clinical trials, statistical epidemiology, quality of life, health economics, and health policy. The department also supports an MS program in clinical research.

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