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Page 2: Your demographics

Q1 Your details

Name	Elizabeth Fong
Company/organisation	[Redacted]
City/town	[Redacted]
Email	[Redacted]

Q2 Your submission is in the capacity as

Other (please specify):
Student Oral Health Therapist

Page 3: The proposal

Q3 Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the 18-year age limit for restorative activities from the OHT scope of practice including: accredited, gazetted programmes allowing oral health therapists to perform restorative treatment on patients 18 years and older an exclusion, such as "Restorative treatment on patients 18 years and older", being placed on oral health therapists' scopes of practice until they complete an accredited adult restorative programme which will allow them to apply to have the exclusion removed (noting that the activities registered oral health therapists can currently perform within their scope of practice remain unchanged).

Strongly agree

Page 4: Your support

Q4 Please describe why you support the proposal

I stand by the proposal for the removal of the 18-year age limit for restorative activities from the OHT scope of practice. The removal of the age limit from the OHT scope of practice will increase access to dental care for a broader range of patients. There is already a high demand for more dental professionals, particularly the needs for restoration. The exclusion will encourage restructuring in the dental community, increasing supply for high demands, and responding to the needs of the community. This change will create a positive impact on dental care in New Zealand.

OHTs are equipped with the relevant skills in treating patients of all ages. As part of the OHT scope of practice, OHTs undergo intensive clinical trainings on both primary and permanent dentition. This shows that OHTs possess the skills and competency to treat both children and adult patients. With the pharmacology module being integrated into the curriculum, OHTs are equipped with the knowledge on pharmacology and medical conditions.

OHTs and dentists have a consultative professional relationship. Concerns about dental complications can be avoided with the dental team working together, with dentists delegating suitable patients to OHTs for treatment. The dental health needs and safety of patients can be assured through a collaborative working relationship between OHTs and dentists. Together, OHTs and dentists are able to provide appropriate and comprehensive care to improve our patients' overall health.

One of the main code of ethics is prioritizing the health needs, safety and interests of patients ahead of personal and financial gains. Currently, 50% of New Zealand's adult population are not attending dental appointment due to lack of access and high costs. The removal of the age limit will, in turn, increase access for New Zealanders and possibly decrease the cost of treatment, without compromising the quality of care rendered. This will promote the goals of achieving good oral health for all, for life.

With the use of innovative diagnostic technology, OHTs are able to detect and diagnose dental caries. Currently, if an OHT detects an occlusal caries on a hygiene patient over 18 years, the OHT has to refer the patient to a dentist for restorative treatment. It would be more practical for the OHT, given that OHTs already possess the skills and knowledge on restorative treatment, to treat the caries without the need for a referral. The removal of the age limit would result in fewer referrals and allowing dentists to manage more complex cases, saving time and cost for both patients and practitioners.

There has been increasing concerns in recent submissions over the dental needs of children in New Zealand. The responsibility of restorations in the primary dentition is not limited to just Dental Therapists and OHTs. Incentives could be given to dentists to encourage them to treat restorations in children. Additionally, there has been increasing submissions regarding the confusion on the OHT scope of practice. Interprofessional education can be proposed to be implemented as part of the curriculum for dentistry students. Interprofessional education is crucial in enabling the different professions to better understand the different roles and skills of each dental professional. This will allow dental professionals to work together more effectively in improving the oral health of our community.

Page 5: Your concerns

Q5 Please describe your specific concern/s with the proposal

Respondent skipped this question

Page 6: Details about OHT scope, qualifications and competencies

Q6 Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed amendments to the OHT scope of practice, prescribed qualifications or competencies as set out in appendices 1 & 2? **No**

Page 7: Specific comments on the proposal

Q7 Please provide us specific comments related to the OHT scope, qualifications and competencies. **Respondent skipped this question**

Page 8: Anything else

Q8 Do you have any further comments on the proposal? **Yes**

Page 10: Last thoughts

Q9 Please provide us your feedback

I look forward to the day when dentists, therapists, hygienists, and OHTs can work together as a holistic team to contribute towards an all rounded and wholesome healthcare for our patients.
