

New Zealand Dental Council  
Email: consultations@dcnz.org.nz

February 16<sup>th</sup> 2026

To Whom it May Concern,

## RE: Response to Proposed Sedation Practice Standard

I support the Council's commitment to patient safety and acknowledge the value of having a clearly articulated sedation practice standard. However, I recommend that the proposed changes remain minimal, as the draft already aligns closely with established international guidance and contemporary evidence.

The proposed standard reflects the principles outlined in **Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists PG09(G)**, as well as sedation frameworks published by the **American Dental Association** and the **American Society of Anesthesiologists**. These organisations recognise that minimal and moderate sedation can be safely provided by appropriately trained dental practitioners within structured monitoring and emergency preparedness systems.

Peer-reviewed literature, including systematic reviews of oral and intravenous sedation in dentistry, consistently demonstrates a low incidence of serious adverse events when practitioners are trained, patients are appropriately selected, and recognised monitoring protocols are followed. The draft standard already incorporates robust safeguards, including defined training pathways, recertification requirements, documentation standards, and emergency preparedness expectations.

Further escalation of regulatory requirements—particularly where evidence of widespread harm in current New Zealand practice has not been demonstrated—risks reducing access to care without clear evidence of improved safety outcomes. Sedation plays a critical role in managing dental anxiety and enabling treatment for vulnerable populations. Overly restrictive measures may unintentionally increase referral to general anaesthesia settings, which carry greater systemic risk and cost.

Sincerely Yours,

Richard Longbottom BDS MS