UNGA 81 CONVENING

Mouth Matters 2

Oral Health for All

Placing Civil Society at the Center of Global Oral Health

DATE	**Friday, September 18, 2026**
VENUE	**New York County Dental Society** 622 Third Avenue, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10017
FORMAT	**Invitation-only, in-person leadership convening**
HOSTED BY	**New York University College of Dentistry** **Alliance for Oral Health Across Borders** **Public Health Foundation of India**

Objectives

- Strengthen collaboration between the siloed components of civil society to champion better-integrated health for all.
- Set the stage for collaborative, coordinated workstreams that continue beyond the convening and support sustained global action.
- Develop a shared vision for advancing Oral Health for All through the engagement of civil society organizations, their knowledge partners, and supporters.
- Identify practical, measurable commitments that participants and their organizations can implement.

Expected Outcomes

- A shared declaration reflecting common priorities and commitments.
- A register of voluntary commitments by participating organizations and leaders.
- Collaborative workstreams focused on advancing Oral Health for All over the coming year, with follow-up reporting and a continuation meeting in 2027.
- A strengthened international movement committed to integrating oral health into broader global health and development agendas.

Operating Principles

- The Chatham House Rule applies throughout.
- Civil society co-chairs every working table and the plenary synthesis.
- The action package is drafted in the room and endorsed before close — a declaration plus a register of individual and collaborative organizational commitments to raise oral health globally.
- Participants agree to an interim check-in and a 2027 reconvening.

AGENDA

All times shown in Eastern Time (ET), i.e., New York City time.

TIME (ET)	SESSION & SPEAKERS
MORNING 9:15 AM – 12:00 PM	
9:15 – 9:45 AM	**Arrival & Breakfast**
9:45 – 9:55 AM	**Welcome & Framing of Oral Health for All** WELCOME **Fernando Neves Hugo, DDS, PhD** Chair, Department of Epidemiology & Health Promotion, NYU College of Dentistry **Deborah Weisfuse, MS, DMD** President, Alliance for Oral Health Across Borders (AOHAB); Immediate Past CODA Commissioner; Past President, New York State Dental Association (NYSDA); Advisory to the Board, New York County Dental Society (NYCDS)
9:55 – 10:05 AM	**Setting the Context: Integrating Oral Health with NCDs** SPEAKER **Monika Arora, PhD** Executive Director, HRIDAY; Vice President, Research and Health Promotion, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI); Immediate Past President, NCD Alliance
10:05 – 10:15 AM	**Distinguished Talk** MODERATOR **Deborah Weisfuse, MS, DMD** President, AOHAB; Immediate Past CODA Commissioner; Past President, NYSDA; Advisory to the Board, NYCDS SPEAKER **Benoit Varenne, DDS, MPH, PhD** Dental Officer, Oral Health Program, World Health Organization
10:15 – 10:50 AM	**Country Case 1 — Brazil** *Integrating oral health into universal health coverage through the Política Nacional de Saúde Bucal (Brasil Sorridente) and the Family Health Strategy.* MODERATOR **David Fray, DDS, MBA** Professor, Department of General Practice and Dental Public Health, University of Texas (UT Health) SPEAKER **Juliana Balbinot Hilgert, DDS, MSc, PhD** Associate Professor of Epidemiology & Public Health Dentistry, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil DISCUSSANTS **Paula Johns, MS** Executive Director & Co-Founder, ACT Health Promotion, Brazil **Azeez Butali, DDS, PhD** Gilbert E. Lily Professor of Diagnostic Sciences, University of Iowa College of Dentistry **Myron Allukian Jr., DDS, MPH** Former Dental Director, City of Boston Health Department; Past President, American Public Health Association (APHA); Faculty of the Harvard, Tufts and Boston University Schools of Dental Medicine

TIME (ET)	SESSION & SPEAKERS
10:50 – 11:00 AM	**Distinguished Talk** MODERATOR **Monika Arora, PhD** Executive Director, HRIDAY; Vice President, PHFI; Immediate Past President, NCD Alliance SPEAKER **Peter Mossey, BDS, PhD** Head of School, University of Dundee School of Dentistry
11:00 – 11:35 AM	**Country Case 2 — Thailand** *The Universal Coverage Scheme and the integration of essential dental care into primary health care networks.* MODERATOR **Ananda Dasanayake, DDS, MS, PhD** Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Health Promotion, NYU College of Dentistry SPEAKER **Chanapong Rojanaworarit, DDS, MS, MPH, PhD** Associate Professor, Department of Population Health, Hofstra University; formerly Department of Epidemiology, Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University, Thailand DISCUSSANTS **Abhinav Vaidya, MD, PhD** Chairperson, South-East Asia Regional NCD Alliance; Kathmandu Medical College, Nepal **Rachel England, DrPH, MPH, FCG (Dent.)** Head of Policy and Advocacy, Oral Health Foundation, UK **Mandana Arabi, MD, PhD** Chief Impact Officer, Smile Train
11:35 – 11:50 AM	**Coffee Break**
11:50 AM – 12:00 PM	**Distinguished Talk — Colgate** MODERATOR **Fernando Neves Hugo, DDS, PhD** Chair, Department of Epidemiology & Health Promotion, NYU College of Dentistry SPEAKER **Maria Ryan, DDS, PhD** Chief Clinical Officer, Colgate-Palmolive

TIME (ET)	SESSION & SPEAKERS
AFTERNOON	12:00 – 5:00 PM

12:00 – 12:35 PM

Country Case 3 — Canada

The Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) and the Oral Health Access Fund.

MODERATOR

Shulamite Huang, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Health Promotion, NYU College of Dentistry

SPEAKER

Pascaline Kengne Talla, DDS, PhD
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Dental Medicine & Oral Health Sciences, McGill University

DISCUSSANTS

Isaac Weisfuse, MD, MPH
Professor, Division of Population Health, Cornell University School of Public Health

Christopher Fox, DMD, DMSc
Chief Executive Officer, International Association for Dental Research

Steve Perlman, DDS, MScD, DHL
Chair, People Advocating for Optimal Health (PAOH); Representing Special Olympics

12:35 – 1:10 PM

Civil Society at the Center: Working Plenary Panel

Panel discussion followed by responders and open-floor question and answer.

MODERATOR

Maureen Perry, DDS, MPA, MAEd
Professor and Former Director, Center for Advanced Oral Health, A.T. Still University, Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health

PANEL

Kristian Hurley, BS, BA
Senior Vice President, Social Impact & Global Advocacy, Beyond Type 1

Md. Shamim Hayder Talukder, MD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer, Eminence; Past Chairperson, South-East Asia Regional NCD Alliance; Member Secretary, Bangladesh NCD Forum

Barbara Vartanian, BBA
Director of Advocacy and Policy, Center for Oral Health Policy and Management, NYU College of Dentistry

Deborah Weisfuse, MS, DMD
President, AOHAB; Immediate Past CODA Commissioner; Past President, NYSDA; Advisory to the Board, NYCDS

RESPONDERS

Cecile Feldman, DMD, MBA
Dean, Rutgers School of Dental Medicine

Matilde Hernandez, DDS, MS, MBA, MPH
Global Senior Director, Professional Engagement & Scientific Affairs, Colgate

Followed by open floor discussion.

1:10 – 2:30 PM

Working Lunch — Four Pillar Tables

Full details with table seating on the following pages.

TIME (ET)	SESSION & SPEAKERS
2:30 – 2:50 PM	**Distinguished Talk** MODERATOR **Ralitsa Androlova** President-Elect, International Dental Students Association (IDSA) SPEAKER **Marko Vujicic, PhD** Chair, Health Policy Institute, American Dental Association
2:50 – 3:05 PM	**Distinguished Talk** MODERATOR **Khalid Elachi, BS** Executive Director, MCW Global SPEAKER **Marion Bergman, MD, MPA** Board Member, Alliance for Oral Health Across Borders; Director, Healthcare Projects (Volunteer), MCW Global; Board Member, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), USA & Kenya
3:05 – 3:35 PM	**Coffee Break & Group Photograph**
3:35 – 4:15 PM	**Plenary Synthesis** MODERATOR **Seyedahmad Rad, DDS, PhD** Post-Doctoral Researcher, Department of Epidemiology & Health Promotion, NYU College of Dentistry
4:15 – 5:00 PM	**Closing Remarks Panel** MODERATOR **Kiran P. Nagdeo, BDS, MPH, PhD(c)** PhD Epidemiology Candidate, NYU School of Global Public Health; Incoming Chair-Elect, APHA Student Assembly; Board Member, AOHAB PANELISTS **Lois Cohen, PhD** *Paul G. Rogers Ambassador for Global Health Research*, Bethesda, MD **Azeez Butali, DDS, PhD** Gilbert E. Lily Professor of Diagnostic Sciences, University of Iowa College of Dentistry **Fernando Neves Hugo, DDS, PhD** Chair, Department of Epidemiology & Health Promotion, NYU College of Dentistry **Monika Arora, PhD** Executive Director, HRIDAY; Vice President, PHFI; Immediate Past President, NCD Alliance **Deborah Weisfuse, MS, DMD** President, AOHAB; Immediate Past CODA Commissioner; Past President, NYSDA; Advisory to the Board, NYCDS
EVENING 6:00 – 9:00 PM	
6:00 – 9:00 PM	**Private Dinner** **ilili Midtown** 157 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022

WORKING LUNCH · 1:10 – 2:30 PM

Delegates are seated at four tables, each anchored to one pillar of the action agenda. Discussion moves toward crafting both individual and collaborative action agendas for participating organizations that will advance global oral health for their constituents — and for all others they may reach. Each table is co-chaired by a civil society leader and a dental sector partner.

PILLAR	GUIDING QUESTION & PROPOSED OUTCOME	TABLE LEADS
01 INCISOR TABLE **Access Without Hardship**	**GUIDING QUESTION.** What would it take to bring essential oral health care into universal health coverage within the next four years? Where are the financing and workforce bottlenecks, and what do Brazil and Thailand teach us about overcoming them? **PROPOSED OUTCOME.** A practical coverage and benefit package that serves as a blueprint for integrating essential oral health care into UHC structures and primary care networks in the countries best positioned to adopt it.	TABLE CO-CHAIRS **Peter Mossey, BDS, PhD** Head of School, University of Dundee School of Dentistry **Steve Perlman, DDS, MScD, DHL** Chair, People Advocating for Optimal Health (PAOH); Representing Special Olympics
02 CANINE TABLE **Oral Health in All Policies**	**GUIDING QUESTION.** How do we move the field beyond dentistry-facing interventions to act on the social, commercial, and structural determinants of oral disease — and which entry points inside and outside the health ministry give us the most traction? **PROPOSED OUTCOME.** A framework governments can implement to embed oral health across sectoral policies — food, housing, income, education, labor, and NCD platforms — grounded in the social, commercial, and structural determinants of health.	TABLE CO-CHAIRS **Monica Griffin** Vice President, Marketing, Beyond Type 1 **Christopher Fox, DMD, DMSc** Chief Executive Officer, International Association for Dental Research
03 PREMOLAR TABLE **Integration Beyond Dentistry**	**GUIDING QUESTION.** How do we frame oral health so that finance ministries, NCD platforms, and SDG processes act on it? Which alliances must we forge in the next 18 months, and who owns each one? **PROPOSED OUTCOME.** A Finance-Ministry-Ready Toolkit containing economic burden figures and investment case examples to guide countries through their 2027–2030 budgetary deliberations.	TABLE CO-CHAIRS **Lois Cohen, PhD** *Paul G. Rogers Ambassador for Global Health Research*, Bethesda, MD **Marko Vujicic, PhD** Chair, Health Policy Institute, American Dental Association
04 MOLAR TABLE **Civil Society Leadership & Accountability**	**GUIDING QUESTION.** What structures give communities, patients, and young people a standing role in setting priorities and holding governments and institutions to account, nationally and globally — and what resources do they need to hold it? **PROPOSED OUTCOME.** A proposal for a civil-society-led accountability mechanism for global oral health, addressing its institutional home, leadership model, and resourcing.	TABLE CO-CHAIRS **Paula Johns, MS** Executive Director & Co-Founder, ACT Health Promotion, Brazil **Herminio Perez** Chair-Elect, Board of Directors, American Dental Education Association (ADEA)

TABLE SEATING

Co-chairs are listed first at each table.

01 INCISOR TABLE
Access Without Hardship

Peter Mossey
Steve Perlman
Maria Ryan
Alan Rosenthal
Pascaline Kengne Talla
Abhinav Vaidya
Md. Shamim Hayder Talukder
Mandana Arabi
Azeez Butali
Juliana Balbinot Hilgert
Chanapong Rojanaworarit

02 CANINE TABLE
Oral Health in All Policies

Monica Griffin
Christopher Fox
Rachel England
Matilde Hernandez
Cathy Albrecht
Maureen Perry
Alex Hall
Fernando Neves Hugo
Kristian Hurley
Barbara Vartanian
Seyedahmad Rad

03 PREMOLAR TABLE
Integration Beyond Dentistry

Lois Cohen
Marko Vujicic
Myron Allukian Jr.
Irina Lazarius
Cecile Feldman
Paula Johns
Isaac Weisfuse
Marion Bergman
Khalid Elachi
Jaskaren Randhawa
Shulamite Huang

04 MOLAR TABLE
Civil Society Leadership & Accountability

Paula Johns
Herminio Perez
Deborah Weisfuse
Monika Arora
David Fray
Monica Griffin
Ralitsa Androlova
Harish Goyal
Ioanna Mentzelopolou
Ananda Dasanayake
Alex Hall

THE ACTION PACKAGE

What this convening produces beyond a declaration.

Commitment Register

Every participant is invited to enter at least one specific, measurable, time-bound commitment before the dinner ends. Each pillar table will additionally address collaborative efforts among the organizations in its group, so that the convening draws on every strength needed to elevate global oral health for the world population. Participants share their plans in good faith, reconnect with the group on progress throughout the year, and take part in a reevaluation in 2027.

Oral Health for All Policy Brief

The anchor deliverable of the publication package: a substantive, jointly authored policy brief framing the case, distilling the Brazilian, Thai, and Canadian experiences into transferable lessons, setting out concrete asks under each of the four pillars, and naming the role of civil society in delivering on them and holding governments to account. Drafted by the co-chairs with civil society co-leads.

TARGETED DISTRIBUTION

- Formally transmitted to the WHO, the UN SDG follow-up architecture, and the health and finance ministries represented at the convening.
- With the goal to implement into the work-plans of the NCD Alliance, UHC2030, and at least one regional UHC platform.
- Circulated to the civil society networks that co-authored it, for use in national advocacy.

Joint Publication Package

- A coordinated op-ed package placed in two outlets — one global English, one Global South — timed to the release of the policy brief.
- A short public-facing summary of the policy brief for civil society and media use.
- Additional outflow to varied regional journals.

Secretariat Function

To be developed for each table, designed for structured coordination of table participants to report progress at the interim meeting.