



Dental Practice Glossary

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Introduction

This document is intended to help familiarize you with common dentistry terms used in a dental practice. This glossary covers both administrative and clinical terminology, acronyms, and definitions.

Section 1: ADA Glossary of Dental Administrative Terms

A

Term	Definition
Accepted Fee	The dollar amount that the contracting dentist has agreed to accept as payment in full from the insurance carrier and the patient. This amount is shown on the notice that accompanies a claim payment.
Adjunctive	A secondary treatment in addition to the primary therapy.
Administrative Costs	Overhead expenses incurred in the operation of a dental benefit program, exclusive of costs for dental services provided.
Administrative Services Only (ASO)	An arrangement under which a third party—for a fee—processes claims and handles paperwork for a self-funded group. This frequently includes all insurance company services (e.g., actuarial services, underwriting, benefit descriptions, etc.) except assumption of risk.
Administrator	One who manages or directs a dental benefit program on behalf of the program's sponsor.
Allowable Charge	The maximum dollar amount that benefit payments are based on for each dental procedure as calculated by the third-party payer.
Alternate Benefit	A provision in a dental plan contract that allows the third-party payer to determine the benefit based on an alternative procedure that is generally less expensive than the one provided or proposed.
Alternative Benefit Plan	A plan, other than a traditional (e.g., fee-for-service, freedom-of-choice) indemnity or service corporation plan, to reimburse a participating dentist for providing treatment to an enrolled patient population.
Alternative Delivery System	An arrangement for the provision of dental services in ways other than the traditional way (e.g., licensed dentist providing treatment in a fee-for-service dental office).
Ancillary	Subordinate or auxiliary to something or someone else; supplementary.
Annual Maximum	The total dollar amount that a plan will pay for dental care incurred by an individual enrollee or family (under a family plan) in a specified benefit period, typically a calendar year.
Assignment of Benefits	A procedure whereby a beneficiary/patient authorizes the administrator of the program to forward payment for a covered procedure directly to the treating dentist.
Attending Dentist's Statement	An obsolete term for the ADA Dental Claim Form. See Claim Form.
Audit	An examination of records or accounts to check their accuracy. A post-treatment record review or clinical examination to verify information reported on claims.

B

Term	Definition
Bad Faith Insurance Practices	<p>The failure to deal with a beneficiary of a dental benefit plan fairly and in good faith; or an activity which impairs the right of the beneficiary to receive the appropriate benefit of a dental benefits plan or to receive them in a timely manner. Some examples of potential bad faith insurance practices include evaluating claims based on standards which are significantly at variance with the standards of the community.</p> <p>Failure to properly investigate a claim for care unreasonably and purposely delaying and/or withholding payment of a claim</p>
Balance Billing	<p>When a dentist bills an enrollee for amounts above the insurance payment and the enrollee's coinsurance. The dentist is balance billing and violating his/her contract with the insurance carrier. When contracted, a dentist agrees to accept the contracted fees and to not bill above that amount. Non-contracted dentists are under no obligation to limit the amount of their fees.</p>
Basic Services/Basic Benefits	<p>A category of dental services in an open network dental benefits contract that usually includes restorations (fillings), oral surgery (extractions), endodontics (root canals), periodontal treatment (root planing), and sealants. What is included may vary by contract. Typically, the same coinsurance percentage applies to all services grouped as basic services.</p>
Beneficiary	<p>A person who is eligible for benefits under a dental benefit contract.</p>
Benefit	<p>The amount payable by a third party toward the cost of various covered dental services, or the dental service or procedure covered by the plan.</p>
Benefit Booklet	<p>A booklet or pamphlet provided to the subscriber that contains a general explanation of the benefits and related provisions of the dental benefit program. Also known as a summary plan description.</p>
Benefit Plan Summary	<p>The description or synopsis of employee benefits as required by ERISA that is to be distributed to employees.</p>
Benefits	<p>The amount that the insurance carrier pays for dental services covered under an enrollee's contract.</p>
Birthday Rule	<p>When a dependent child's parents both have dental coverage, this rule states that the primary program (the one which pays first) is the one covering the parent whose month and day of birth falls first in the calendar year. The birthday rule is the most common rule for determining primary v. secondary coverage, but it may be superseded by a court order (e.g., a divorce agreement).</p>
By Report	<p>A written description of the service provided that is prepared when the term "by report" is included in a procedure code nomenclature; may be requested by a third-party payer to provide additional information for claims processing.</p>

C

Term	Definition
Cafeteria Plan	Employee benefit plan in which employees select their medical insurance coverage and other nontaxable fringe benefits from a list of options provided by the employer. Cafeteria plan participants may receive additional, taxable cash compensation if they select less expensive benefits.
Capitation	Compensation paid to general dentists in closed network dental benefit plans (e.g., a DHMO) for providing covered services to enrollees assigned to their office. Insurance capitation-based plans require enrollees to select the network dentist from whom they are to receive all or most treatment, and the enrollee is required to pay a predefined amount (i.e., copayment) for each procedure at the time of treatment.
Case Management	The monitoring and coordination of treatment rendered to patients with specific diagnoses or who require high cost or extensive services. May include complex treatment plans or discussion between multiple practitioners. A process of identifying patients with special health care needs, developing a healthcare strategy that meets those needs, and coordinating and monitoring the care, with the ultimate goal of achieving the optimum health care outcome in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)	The federal agency with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that is responsible for administering the Medicare, Medicaid, State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), HIPAA, and the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) programs.
Claim	A request for payment under a dental benefit plan; a statement listing services rendered, the dates of services, and itemization of costs. The completed request serves as the basis for payment of benefits.
Claim Form	A paper or electronic form developed by the American Dental Association that is used to report dental procedures to a third-party payer in order to file for benefits under a dental benefit program.
Claimant	Person, authorized provider, patient, or certificate holder who files a claim for benefits.
Claims Payment Fraud	The intentional manipulation or alteration of facts or procedure codes submitted by a treating dentist that results in a lower payment to the beneficiary and/or the treating dentist than would have been paid if the manipulation had not occurred.
Claims Reporting Fraud	The intentional misrepresentation of material facts concerning treatment provided and/or charges made that would cause a higher payment than if the misrepresentation not occurred.
	As related to prompt payment laws, a claim for payment of covered health care expenses that is submitted to a payer on the carrier's standard claim form using the most current published procedural codes, with all the required fields

Clean Claim	completed with information sufficient to adjudicate the claim in accordance with the payer's published filing requirements.
Closed Panel/Closed Network Plan	A dental insurance benefit plan which requires the eligible patients to receive their dental care from a specific dentist who has contractually agreed to the terms, payments, and benefits of the plan. Usually only a limited number of dentists in an area are allowed to participate in these types of plans.
Code on Dental Procedures and Nomenclature (Code)	A listing of dental procedure codes and their descriptive terms published by the American Dental Association (ADA); used for recording dental services on the patient record as well as for reporting dental services and procedures to dental benefit plans. The Code is printed in a manual titled Current Dental Terminology.
Coinsurance	A provision of a dental benefit program by which the beneficiary shares in the cost of covered services, generally on a percentage basis; the percentage of a covered dental expense that a beneficiary must pay after the deductible is paid. A typical coinsurance arrangement is one in which the third party pays 80% of the allowed benefit of the covered dental service and the beneficiary pays the remainder of the amount due the dentist. Percentages vary and may apply to table of allowance plans; maximum allowable benefit plans and direct reimbursement programs.
Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)	Legislation relative to mandated benefits for all types of employee benefit plans that includes requirements for continued coverage for employees and/or their dependents for 18 months who would otherwise lose coverage (30 months for dependents in the event of the employee's death).
Contract	<p>A legally enforceable agreement between two or more individuals or entities that confers rights and duties on the parties. Common types include contracts between a dental benefit organization and an individual dentist to provide dental treatment to members of an alternative benefit plan. These contracts define the dentist's duties both to beneficiaries of the dental benefit plan and the dental benefit organization, and usually define the manner in which the dentist will be reimbursed.</p> <p>contracts between a dental benefit organization and a group plan sponsor. These contracts typically describe the benefits of the group plan and the rates to be charged for those benefits.</p>
Contract Benefit Level	The percentage of the maximum contract allowance that the insurance carrier pays after the deductible has been satisfied.
Contract Fee Schedule Plan	A dental benefit plan in which participating dentists agree to accept a list of specific fees for dental treatment provided.
Contract Practice	A dental practice or organization that has a contractual arrangement with an insurer for the provision of services under an insurance contract.
Contract Term	Usually a 12-month period for which a contract is written and during which a group's deductibles, maximums, and other provisions apply. This may or may not be the same as a calendar year. Also known as the benefit year.

Contracted Dentist	A dentist who has a contract with an insurance company. The dentist agrees to accept the insurance determination of fees as payment in full for services rendered to an enrollee of a contracted dentist. Also may be referred to as participating dentist, network dentist, or contracting dentist.
Contributory Program	A dental benefit program in which the enrollee shares in the monthly premium of the program with the program sponsor (usually the employer), generally through payroll deduction.
Coordination of Benefits (COB)	A process that carriers use to determine the order of payment and amount each carrier will pay when a person receives dental services that are covered by more than one benefit plan (i.e., dual coverage). Ensures that no more than 100% of the charges for services are paid when an enrollee has coverage under two or more benefits plans (e.g., when a child is covered by both parents' plans).
Copayment	Beneficiary's share of the dentist's fee after the benefit plan has paid.
Cost Containment	Features of a dental benefit program or of the administration of the program designed to reduce or eliminate certain charges to the plan.
Cost Sharing	The share of health expenses that a beneficiary must pay, including the deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, and charges over the amount reimbursed by the dental benefit plan.
Coverage	Benefits available to an individual covered under a dental benefit plan.
Covered Charges	Services and supplies which are reimbursed in whole or in part under the conditions of the dental benefit plan, subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement or insurance policy. Charges are subject to any contractual agreements, exclusions, and limitations. Any charges not covered by the plan are considered non-covered charges.
Covered Person	An individual who is eligible for benefits under a dental benefit program.
Covered Services	Services for which payment is provided under the terms of the dental benefit contract.
Current Dental Terminology (CDT)	The ADA reference manual that contains the code on dental procedures, nomenclature, and other information pertinent to patient record keeping and claim preparation by a dental office; published biennially (e.g., CDT 2009-2010).
Current Procedural Terminology (CPT)	A listing of descriptive terms and identifying codes developed by the American Medical Association (AMA) for reporting practitioner services and procedures to medical plans and Medicare.

D

Term	Definition
Deductible	The amount of dental expense for which the beneficiary is responsible for before a third party will assume any liability for payment of benefits. Deductibles may be an annual or one-time charge and may vary in amount from program to program.

Dental Benefit Organization	Any organization offering a dental benefit plan. Also known as dental plan organization.
Dental Benefit Program	The specific dental benefit plan offered to enrollees by the sponsor.
Dental Enrollment Credentialing	A formal process that defines the standards and requirements for participation in third-party programs. The process verifies professional qualifications in order to allow licensed dentists to provide services to members of these programs.
Dental Home	The ongoing relationship between the dentist who is the primary dental care provider and the patient, which includes comprehensive oral health care, beginning no later than age one, pursuant to ADA policy.
Dental Prepayment	A method of financing the cost of dental services prior to receiving the services.
Dental Service Corporation	A legally constituted, not-for-profit organization (e.g., Delta Dental Plans and Blue Cross & Blue Shield Plans) that negotiates and administers contracts for dental care.
Dentistry	The evaluation, diagnosis, prevention, and/or treatment (nonsurgical, surgical, or related procedures) of diseases, disorders, and/or conditions of the oral cavity, maxillofacial area, and/or the adjacent and associated structures and their impact on the human body; provided by a dentist within the scope of their education, training, and experience in accordance with the ethics of the profession and applicable law.
Dependents	Generally, the spouse and children of a covered individual, as defined by the terms of the dental benefit contract.
Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs)	A system of classifying hospital patients based on diagnosis, consisting of distinct groupings. A DRG assignment to a case is based on the patient's: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. principal diagnosis 2. treatment procedures performed 3. age 4. gender 5. discharge status
Diagnostic and Preventive Services	A category of dental services in an open network dental benefits contract that usually includes oral evaluations, routine cleanings, x-rays, and fluoride treatments. These services may vary by contract. Typically, the same coinsurance percentage applies to all services grouped under diagnostic and preventive services.
Direct Reimbursement	A self-funded program in which the individual is reimbursed based on a percentage of dollars spent for dental care provided. Also allows beneficiaries to seek treatment from the dentist of their choice.
Down-coding	A practice of third-party payers in which the benefit code has been changed to a less complex and/or lower cost procedure than was reported, except where delineated in contract agreements.
Dual Choice Program	A benefit package from which an eligible individual can choose to enroll in either an alternative dental benefit program or a traditional dental benefit program.

Dual Coverage	When dental treatment for an enrollee is covered by more than one dental benefits plan (e.g., when dental services are provided to a child who is covered by both parents' benefit plans).
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E

Term	Definition
Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program (EPSDT)	A federal program that provides comprehensive health care for children through periodic screenings, and diagnostic and treatment services.
Effective Date	The date a dental benefits contract begins; may also be the date that benefits begin for a plan enrollee.
Eligibility	The circumstances or conditions that define who and when a person may qualify to enroll in a plan and/or a specific category of covered services. These circumstances or conditions may include length of employment, job status, length of time an enrollee has been covered under the plan, dependency, child and student age limits, etc.
Employment Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA)	A federal act, passed in 1974, which established new standards and reporting/disclosure requirements for employer-funded pension and welfare benefit programs. To date, self-funded health benefit plans operating under ERISA have been held to be exempt from most state insurance laws, although the courts have held that the states can regulate the medical care provided under such plans, as by requiring mandatory review of adverse HMO determinations.
Enrollee	An individual covered by a benefit plan.
Entity	Something that exists as a particular and discrete unit. Persons and corporations are equivalent entities under the law.
Established Patient	A patient who has received professional services within the past three years from a dentist or another dentist of the same specialty who belongs to the same group practice, subject to state laws.
Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO)	A type of preferred provider organization under which employees must use providers from the specified network of dentists to receive coverage; there is no coverage for care received from a non-network provider except in an emergency situation.
Expiration Date	In dentistry, the date on which the dental benefit contract expires; the date an individual ceases to be eligible for benefits.
Explanation of Benefits (EOB)	A written statement to a beneficiary from a third-party payer after a claim has been reported that indicates the benefit/charges covered or not covered by the dental benefit plan. Every insurance company will have their own unique internal index of codes used to explain what the determination of the claim is. The patient

	will receive a copy of the EOB, which will also include contact information for appealing a claim.
Extended Care Facility	A facility (e.g., a nursing home) which is licensed to provide 24-hour nursing care service in accordance with state and local laws. Several levels of care may be provided (e.g., skilled, intermediate, custodial, or any combination).
Extension of Benefits	Extension of eligibility for benefits for covered services, usually designed to ensure completion of treatment commenced prior to the expiration date. Duration is generally expressed in terms of days.

F

Term	Definition
Family Deductible	A deductible that is satisfied by combined expenses of all covered family members (e.g., a program with a \$25 deductible may limit its application to a maximum of three deductibles, or \$75 for the family, regardless of the number of family members).
Fee	The monetary value assigned to a procedure delivered by a dentist to a patient. There are various terms that include the word or concept of a fee that are defined as follows: The fee for a service that is set by the dentist, which reflects the costs of providing the procedure and the value of the dentist's professional judgment. A contractual relationship does not change a dentist's full fee. It is always appropriate to report the full fee for each service reported to a third party payer maximum plan benefit—The reimbursement level determined by the administrator of a dental benefit plan for a specific dental procedure. This may vary widely by geographic region or by benefit plans within a region.
Fee-for-service	A method of reimbursement by which the dentist establishes and expects to receive their full fee for the specific service(s) performed.
Fee Schedule	A list of the charges established or agreed to by a dentist for specific dental services.
Flexible Benefits	A benefit program in which an employee has a choice of credits or dollars for distribution among various benefit options (e.g., health and disability insurance, dental benefits, childcare, or pension benefits).
Flexible Spending Account	An employee reimbursement account primarily funded with employee-designated salary reductions. Funds are reimbursed to the employee for health care (medical and/or dental), dependent care, and/or legal expenses, and are considered a nontaxable benefit.
Franchise Dentistry	Refers to a system for marketing a dental practice, usually under a trade name, where permitted by state laws. In return for a financial investment or other consideration, participating dentists may also receive the benefits of media

	advertising, a national referral system, and financial and management consultation.
Freedom of Choice	The concept that a patient has the right to choose any licensed dentist to deliver their oral health care without any type of coercion.

G

Term	Definition
Gate Keeper System	A managed care concept used by some alternative benefit plans in which enrollees select a primary care dentist (usually a general practitioner or pediatric dentist) who is responsible for providing non-specialty care and managing referrals, as appropriate, for specialty and ancillary care.

H

Term	Definition
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996	A federal law that includes Administrative Simplification Provisions that require all health plans, including ERISA, as well as health care clearinghouses and any dentist who transmits health information in an electronic transaction, to use a standard format. The HIPAA standard electronic dental claim also requires the use of the ADA's Code on Dental Procedures and Nomenclature code set. Paper transactions are not subject to this requirement.
Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)	A legal entity that accepts responsibility and financial risk for providing specified services to a defined population during a defined period of time at a fixed price. An organized system of health care delivery that provides comprehensive care to enrollees through designated providers. Enrollees are generally assessed a monthly payment for health care services and may be required to remain in the program for a specified amount of time.
Healthcare Provider Taxonomy	The code that identifies the type of health care provider involved in furnishing services to beneficiaries.
Hold Harmless Clause	A contract provision in which one party to the contract promises to be responsible for liability incurred by the other party. Hold harmless clauses frequently appear in the following contexts: Contracts between dental benefit organizations and an individual dentist often contain a promise by the dentist to reimburse the dental benefit organization for any liability the organization incurs due to dental treatment provided to beneficiaries of the organization's dental benefit plan. This may include a promise to pay the dental benefit organization's attorney fees and related costs.

	<p>Contracts between dental benefit organizations and a group plan sponsor may include a promise by the dental benefit organization to assume responsibility for disputes between a beneficiary of the group plan and an individual dentist when the dentist's charge exceeds the amount the organization pays for the service on behalf of the beneficiary.</p> <p>If the dentist takes action against the patient to recover the difference between the amount billed by the dentist and the amount paid by the organization, the dental benefit organization will take over the defense of the claim and will pay any judgment and court costs.</p>
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I

Term	Definition
<p>Inappropriate Fee Discounting Practices</p>	<p>Intentionally engaging in acts which would force a dentist, who does not have a participating provider agreement, to accept discounted fees or be bound by the terms and conditions set forth in the participating provider contract.</p> <p>Some examples of inappropriate fee discounting practices include issuing reimbursement checks which, upon signing, result in the dentist accepting the amount as payment in full using claim forms which, upon signing, require the dentist to accept the terms of the plan's contract issuing insurance cards which state that the submittal of a claim by a dentist means that he or she accepts all terms and conditions set forth in the participating provider contract sending communications to patients of nonparticipating dentists which state that he or she is not responsible for any amount above usual, customary, and reasonable fees as established by the plan</p>
<p>Incentive Program</p>	<p>A dental benefit program that pays an increasing share of the treatment cost, provided that the covered individual utilizes the benefits of the program during each incentive period (usually a year) and receives the treatment prescribed (e.g., a 70%-30% copayment program in the first year of coverage may become an 80%-20% program in the second year if the subscriber visits the dentist in the first year as stipulated in the program). Most frequently, there is a corresponding percentage reduction in the programs copayment level (but never below the initial copayment level) if the covered individual fails to visit the dentist in a given year.</p>
<p>Indemnity Plan</p>	<p>A non-network dental plan that reimburses the member or dentist at a certain percentage of charges for services rendered, often after a deductible has been satisfied. Indemnity plans typically place no restrictions on which dentist a member may visit. Indemnity plans are also referred to as fee-for-service plans.</p>
<p>Indigent</p>	<p>Individuals whose income falls below the poverty line as defined by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB).</p>

Individual Practice Association (IPA)	A legal entity organized and governed by individual participating dentists for the primary purpose of collectively entering into contracts to provide dental services to enrolled populations.
In-network/ Out-of-network	Services provided in a plan either by a contracted or noncontracted dentist. In-network dentists have agreed to participate in a plan and to provide treatment according to certain administrative guidelines and to accept their contracted fees as payment in full. Different plans are served by distinct dentist networks.
Insured	Person covered by an insurance contract.
Insurer	The party in an insurance contract (usually an insurance company) that promises to pay a benefit if a specified loss occurs.
International Classification of Diseases (ICD)	Diagnostic codes designed for the classification of morbidity and mortality information for statistical purposes the indexing of hospital records by disease and operations data storage and retrieval
ISO	Tooth numbering system

J

Term	Definition
JO	Designation of the ANSI/ADA/ISO tooth numbering system on the dental claim form.
JP	Designation of the Universal/National tooth numbering system on the dental claim form.

L

Term	Definition
Least Expensive Alternative Treatment (LEAT)	A type of cost containment measure used by many third-party payers. Under a LEAT clause, when there are multiple treatment options for a specific condition, the plan will only pay for the least expensive treatment.
Liability	An obligation to pay an amount in money, goods, or services to another party.
Lifetime Maximum	The cumulative dollar amount that a plan will pay for dental care incurred by an individual enrollee or family (under a family plan) for the life of the enrollee or the plan. Lifetime maximums usually apply to specific services such as orthodontic treatment.
Limitations and Exclusions	Dental plans typically do not cover every dental procedure. Each plan contains a list of conditions or circumstances that limit or exclude services from coverage.

	Limitations may be related to time or frequency (e.g., no more than two cleanings in 12 months or one cleaning every six months). Exclusions are dental services that are not covered by the plan.
Locus	A site or location.

M

Term	Definition
Major Services	A category of dental services in an open network dental benefits contract that usually includes crowns, dentures, implants, and oral surgery. Included services may vary by contract. Typically, the same coinsurance percentage applies to all services grouped under major services.
Managed Care	Any contractual arrangement where payment or reimbursement and/or utilization are controlled by a third party. The term "managed care" refers to a cost containment system that directs the utilization of health benefits by restricting the type, level, and frequency of treatment limiting the access to care controlling the level of reimbursement for services
Maximum Plan Benefit	The reimbursement level determined by the administrator of a dental benefit plan for a specific dental procedure. This may vary widely by geographic region or by benefit plans within a region.
Medicaid	A federal assistance program established as Title XIX under the Social Security Act of 1965 which provides payment for medical care for certain low income individuals and families. The program is funded jointly by the state and federal governments and administered by states.
Medically Necessary Care	The reasonable and appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care (including supplies, appliances, and devices) as determined and prescribed by qualified, appropriate health care providers in treating any condition, illness, disease, injury, or birth 1-13 developmental malformations where care is medically necessary for the purpose of controlling or eliminating infection, pain, and disease; and restoring facial configuration or function necessary for speech, swallowing, or chewing
Medicament	Substance or combination of substances intended to be pharmacologically active, specially prepared to be prescribed, dispensed, or administered by authorized personnel to prevent or treat diseases in humans or animals.
Medicament, Topical	Pharmacological substance especially prepared to be applied on tissues of the oral cavity.
Medicare	A federal insurance program enacted in 1965 as Title XVIII of the Social Security Act that provides certain inpatient hospital services and physician services for all persons age 65 and older and eligible disabled individuals. The program is

	administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), previously known as the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA).
Member	An individual enrolled in a dental benefit program.

N

Term	Definition
National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)	Professional or trade association for state departments of insurance (http://www.naic.org).
National Provider Identifier (NPI)	An identifier assigned by the federal government to all providers considered to be HIPAA covered entities. Dentists who are not covered entities may elect to obtain an NPI at their discretion or may be enumerated if required by a participating provider agreement with a third-party payer, or by applicable state law/regulation.
Network	A panel of dentists that contractually agree to provide treatment according to administrative guidelines for a certain plan, including limits to the fees they will accept as payment in full.
Nonduplication of Benefits	One of the ways the secondary carrier may calculate its portion of the payment if a patient is covered by two benefit plans. The secondary carrier calculates what it would have paid if it were the primary plan and subtracts what the other plan paid (e.g., if the primary carrier paid 80 percent and the secondary carrier normally covers 80 percent as well, the secondary carrier would not make any additional payment. If the primary carrier paid 50 percent, however, the secondary carrier would pay up to 30 percent).
Nonparticipating Dentist	Any dentist who does not have a contractual agreement with a dental benefit organization to render dental care to members of a dental benefit program.

O

Term	Definition
Open Access	A plan feature that allows enrollees to visit the dentists of their choice (i.e., freedom of choice). Also sometimes used to describe an enrollee's ability to seek treatment from a specialist without first obtaining a referral from their primary care dentist.
Open Enrollment	The annual period in which employees can select from a choice of benefit programs.
Open Network Plan	A type of dental plan where enrollees can visit any licensed dentist and can change dentists at any time without contacting the benefits carrier.

Open Panel	A dental benefits plan that allows covered patients to receive care from any dentist and allows any dentist to participate. Any dentist may accept or refuse to treat patients enrolled in the plan. Open panel plans often are described as freedom of choice plans.
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	US Federal agency responsible for making and enforcing employee safety regulations.
Out-of-pocket Costs	Any amount the enrollee is responsible for paying (e.g., coinsurance or copayments, deductibles, and costs above the annual maximum).
Overbilling	The misrepresentation of a fee as higher than actual charges (e.g., when a patient is charged one fee and an insurance company is billed a higher fee to benefit the patient's co-payment, or to increase a patient's fee because they are covered under a dental benefits plan).
Overcoding	Reporting a more complex and/or higher cost procedure than was actually performed. Also known as up-coding.

P

Term	Definition
Participating Dentist	See Contracted Dentist.
Patient	An individual who has established a professional relationship with a dentist for the delivery of dental health care. For matters relating to communication of information and consent, this term includes the patient's parent, caretaker, guardian, or other individual as appropriate under state law and the circumstances of the case.
Patient's Share	The portion of a dentist's fee that an enrollee must pay for covered services, including coinsurance or copayment, any remaining deductible, any amount over plan maximums, and/or any services the plan does not cover.
Payer	A self-insured employer, insurance company, governmental agency, or other party responsible for payment of health care claims of covered persons.
Peer Review	An evaluation of the quality and conduct of an individual's work by the individual's professional equals (i.e., peers) in order to resolve questions or disputes regarding the quality or conduct of the work. Peer review, when applied to dentistry, is a process, consistently structured and implemented by organized dentistry, in which a dentist's professional equals (i.e., peers) resolve questions or disputes regarding the quality or appropriateness of care provided by the dentist or the fairness of the fee the dentist charged in an individual case, by retrospectively evaluating the quality or appropriateness of care in relation to professional norms or criteria, or evaluating the fee charged in relation to the dentist's fee for the given complexity and level of care provided.

Peer Review Organization (PRO)	An organization established by an amendment of the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (TEFRA) to review medical services furnished primarily in a hospital setting and/or in conjunction with care provided under the Medicare and Medicaid programs. In addition to their review and monitoring functions, these entities can invoke sanctions, penalties, or other corrective actions for noncompliance in organization standards.
Percentile	The number in a frequency distribution below which a certain percentage of fees will fall (e.g., the 90th percentile is the number that divides the distribution of fees into the lower 90 percent and the upper 10 percent, or the fee level at which 90 percent of dentists charge that amount or less, and 10 percent more.
Point of Service	A health plan allowing the member to choose to receive a service from a participating or non-participating provider, usually with different benefit levels associated with the use of participating providers.
Preauthorization	Statement by a third-party payer indicating that proposed treatment will be covered under the terms of the benefit contract.
Precertification	Confirmation by a third-party payer of a patient's eligibility for coverage under a dental benefit program.
Predetermination	A process where a dentist submits a treatment plan to the payer before treatment begins. The payer reviews the treatment plan and notifies the dentist and patient of one or more of the following: patient eligibility covered services amounts payable co-payment deductibles plan maximums.
Pre-existing Condition	Oral health condition of an enrollee which existed before their enrollment in a dental program
Preferred Provider Organization (PPO)	A formal agreement between a purchaser of a dental benefit program and a defined group of dentists for the delivery of dental services to a specific patient population, as an adjunct to a traditional plan, using discounted fees for cost savings.
Prefiling of Fees	The submission of a participating dentist's full fees for the purpose of establishing, in advance, that dentist's full fees and the fees in a geographic area to determine benefits under a dental benefit program.
Premium	The amount charged by a dental benefit organization for coverage of a level of benefits for a specified time.
Prepaid Dental Plan	A method for financing the cost of dental care for a defined population in advance of receipt of services.
Preventative Services	See Diagnostic and preventive services.
Primary Enrollee	An individual (commonly, an employee or member of an association) who meets the eligibility requirements for enrollment in a dental plan. Family members of a primary enrollee are called dependents.
Primary Payer	The third-party payer determined to have initial responsibility in a benefit determination.
Prompt Payment Laws	These laws are enacted state by state and set standards for the prompt, fair, and equitable settlement of insurance claims by requiring that a set amount of

	interest be paid on clean claims that are paid beyond the established timeframe. These laws need to be analyzed on a case by case basis to determine whether a lawsuit has to be filed by the state department of insurance. Also known as fair claims practice regulations.
Proof of Loss	Verification of services rendered or expenses incurred by the submission of claim forms, radiographs, study models, and/or other diagnostic material. Documentary evidence 1-17 is required by a payer to prove a valid claim exists. It usually consists of a claim form completed by the patient's treating dentist.
Prospective Review	Prior assessment by a payer or payer's agent that proposed services are appropriate for a particular patient and/or that the patient and the category of service are covered by a benefit plan. See preauthorization, precertification, predetermination, and second-opinion program.
Provider	Any licensed dentist who performs dental health services for an enrollee, including general dentists and dental specialists (e.g., endodontists, periodontists, orthodontists, pediatric dentists, oral surgeons, and prosthodontists).
Public Health Dentist	A dentist whose practice is limited to the science and art of preventing and controlling dental diseases and promoting dental health through organized community efforts.
Public Health Dentistry	Dental public health is the science and art of preventing and controlling dental diseases and promoting dental health through organized community efforts. It is that form of dental practice which serves the community as a patient rather than the individual. It is concerned with the dental health education of the public through applied dental research and the administration of group dental care programs, as well as the prevention and control of dental diseases on a community basis.
Purchaser	Organization or entity (often an employer or union) that contracts with a dental benefit organization to provide dental benefits to an enrolled population.

R

Term	Definition
Reimbursement	Payment made by a third party to a beneficiary, or to a dentist on behalf of the beneficiary, to offset expenses incurred for a service covered by the dental benefit plan.
Reinsurance	Insurance for third-party payers to spread their risk for losses (i.e., claims paid) over a specified dollar amount.
Relative Value System	Coded listing of professional services with unit values to indicate relative complexity as measured by time, skill, and overhead costs. Third-party payers typically assign a dollar value per unit to calculate provider reimbursement.

Retail Store Dentistry	Refers to dental services offered within a retail, department, or drug store operation. Typically, space is leased from the store by a separate administrative group that, in turn, subleases to a dentist or dental group providing the actual dental services. The dental operation generally maintains the same hours of operation as the store and appointments are often not necessary. Considered to be a type of practice, not a dental benefit plan model.
Retrospective Review	A post-treatment assessment of services on a case-by-case or aggregate basis after the services have been performed.
Risk Pool	A portion of provider fees or capitation payments withheld as financial reserves to cover unanticipated utilization of services in an alternative benefit plan.

S

Term	Definition
Schedule of Benefits	A listing of dental services and the maximum benefit amounts an insurer will pay for a given service. Specificity will vary by benefit plan.
Second-opinion Program	An opinion about the appropriateness of a proposed treatment provided by a practitioner other than the one making the original recommendation; some benefit plans require such opinions for selected services.
Self-funded Plan	A benefit plan in which the plan sponsor bears the entire risk of utilization. Some plans may be partially self-funded, if the sponsor employs indemnified stop-loss insurance to protect against the risk of unanticipated higher utilization. Third-party administrators may provide claims processing and other administrative services without bearing any of the risk of utilization of the plan.
Self-insurance	The setting aside of funds by an individual or organization to meet anticipated dental care expenses or its dental care claims, and accumulation of a fund to absorb fluctuations in the amount of expenses or claims. The funds set aside or accumulated are used to provide dental benefits directly instead of purchasing coverage from an insurance carrier.
Service Corporations	Dental benefit organizations established under not-for-profit state statutes for the purpose of providing health care coverage (e.g., Delta Dental Plans, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans).
Specification No. 3950	This schema (ANSI/ADA/ISO Specification No. 3950–1984 Dentistry Designation System for Tooth and Areas of the Oral Cavity) is designed to identify areas of the oral cavity as well as uniquely number permanent and primary dentition. Supernumerary teeth are not yet identified using this standard.
Statistically Based Utilization Review	A system that examines the distribution of treatment procedures based on claims information. In order to be reasonably reliable, the application of such claims analyses of specific dentists should include data on the practice type, dentist experience, socioeconomic characteristics, and geographic location.

Submitted Fee	The amount that is billed by the dentist and entered on a claim as the charge for a specific procedure.
Summary Plan Description	See Benefit Booklet.

T

Term	Definition
Table Program/ Table of Allowances	A dental plan where benefits are based on a specific table or schedule of allowances or fees. The table lists the maximum amount that a plan will pay for 1-19 for each procedure. Enrollees are responsible for paying any difference between the amount the plan pays and the amount the dentist charges for the service. For non-contracted dentists, there is no limit to the amount the dentist may charge.
Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (TEFRA)	Legislation (Public Law 97-248) affecting health maintenance organizations and the Medicare and Medicaid programs that provides regulations for the development of HMO risk contracting with the Medicare program and, through amendment, established new provisions for the foundation and operation of peer review organizations.
Third-party	The party to a dental benefit contract that may collect premiums, assume financial risk, pay claims, and/or provide other administrative services. Also known as administrative agent, carrier, insurer, or underwriter.
Third-party Administrator (TPA)	The claims payer who assumes responsibility for administering health benefit plans without assuming any financial risk. Some commercial insurance carriers and Blue Cross & Blue Shield plans also have TPA operations to accommodate self-funded employers seeking administrative services only (ASO) contracts.
Third-party Payer	An organization other than the patient (i.e., first party) or health care provider (i.e., second party) involved in the financing of personal health services.
Transitional	Relating to a passage or change from one position, state, phase, or concept to another.
Type 1 Individual Provider	A health care practitioner who is a single human being. All dentists are eligible to apply for Type 1 NPIs, regardless of whether they are covered by HIPAA.
Type 2 Organization Provider	A health care provider that is an organization (e.g., a group practice or corporation). Individual dentists who are incorporated may enumerate as Type 2 providers, in addition to being enumerated as a Type 1. All incorporated dental practices and group practices are eligible for enumeration as Type 2 providers. On paper, there is no way to distinguish a Type 1 from a Type 2 in the absence of any associated data, as they are identical in format. Additional information on NPI and enumeration can be obtained from the ADA's Internet Website: http://www.ada.org/goto/npi .

U

Term	Definition
Unbundling of Procedures	The separating of a dental procedure into component parts with each part having a charge so that the cumulative charge of the components is greater than the total charge to patients who are not beneficiaries of a dental benefit plan for the same procedure.
Universal/ National Tooth Numbering System	A system that assigns a unique number from 1-32 to permanent teeth and a unique letter from A-T for primary teeth.
Up-code	Reporting a more complex and/or higher cost procedure than was actually performed. Also known as overcoding.
Usual, Customary, and Reasonable Fees	These are three separate terms that are often incorrectly used interchangeably, synonymously, or as a single term abbreviated as "UCR" when describing dental benefit plans.
Usual Fee	The fee which an individual dentist most frequently charges for a specific dental procedure independent of any contractual agreement. It is always appropriate to modify this fee based on the nature and severity of the condition being treated and by any medical or dental complications or unusual circumstances.
Utilization	The extent to which the members of a covered group use a program over a stated period of time; specifically measured as a percentage determined by dividing the number of covered individuals who submitted one or more claims by the total number of covered individuals. Also, an expression of the number and types of services used by the members of a covered group over a specified period of time.
Utilization Management	A set of techniques used by or on behalf of purchasers of health care benefits to manage the cost of health care prior to its provision by influencing patient care decision-making through case-by-case assessments of the appropriateness of care based on accepted dental practices.
Utilization Review, Statistically Based	A system that examines the distribution of treatment procedures based on claims information. In order to be reasonably reliable, the application of such claims analyses of specific dentists should include data on the practice type, dentist experience, socioeconomic characteristics, and geographic location.

W

Term	Definition
Waiting Period	The period between employment or enrollment in a dental program and the date when a covered person becomes eligible for a given benefit.

Worker's Compensation	A benefit paid to an employee who suffers a work-related injury or illness.
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Section 2: Dental Clinical Terms

A

Term	Definition
Abscess	Acute or chronic localized inflammation (likely with a collection of pus) associated with tissue destruction and, frequently, swelling; usually secondary to infection.
Abutment	A tooth or implant fixture used as a support for a prosthesis.
Abutment Crown	Artificial crown also serving for the retention or support of a dental prosthesis.
Accession	Addition of a test specimen, previously collected by a health care provider, to a laboratory specimen collection; recording of essential specimen identification data in a laboratory-maintained file in chronological order of laboratory specimen acquisition; assignment of an identification code to the specimen.
Acid Etching	Use of an acidic chemical substance to prepare the tooth enamel and or dentin surface to provide retention for bonding.
Acute Periradicular or Acute Apical Abscess	An inflammatory reaction to pulpal infection and necrosis characterized by rapid onset, spontaneous pain, tenderness of the tooth to pressure, pus formation, and eventual swelling of associated tissues. May also be known as acute periapical abscess, acute alveolar abscess, dentoalveolar abscess, phoenix abscess, recrudescence abscess, or secondary apical abscess.
Adhesion	State in which two surfaces are held together by chemical or physical forces or both with or without the aid of an adhesive. Adhesion is one aspect of bonding.
Adhesive	Any substance that joins or creates close adherence of two or more surfaces; Intermediate material that causes two materials to adhere to each other.
Adolescent Dentition	In orthodontic coding, refers to the stage of permanent dentition prior to cessation of growth.
Adult Dentition	The permanent teeth of adulthood that either replace the primary dentition or erupt distally to the primary molars;
Adverse Selection	A statistical condition within a group when there is a greater demand for dental services and/or more services necessary than the average expected for that group.
Allogenic	Belonging to the same species, but genetically different.

Allograft	Graft of tissue between genetically dissimilar members of the same species. Donors may be cadavers, living related, or living unrelated individuals. Also called allogenic graft or homograft.
Alloplastic	Synthetic material often used for tissue augmentation or replacement.
Alloy	Compound combining two or more elements having properties not existing in any of the single constituent elements. Sometimes used to refer to amalgam.
Alveolar	Referring to the bone to which a tooth is attached.
Alveoloplasty	Surgical procedure for recontouring supporting bone, sometimes in preparation for a prosthesis.
Amalgam	An alloy used in direct dental restorations. Typically composed of mercury, silver, tin, and copper along with other metallic elements added to improve physical and mechanical properties.
Anatomical Crown	The portion of tooth normally covered by, and including, enamel.
Ancillary	Subordinate or auxiliary to something or someone else; supplementary.
Anesthesia	A patient's level of consciousness is determined by the provider and not the route of administration of anesthesia. State dental boards regulate the use of anesthesia techniques. The ADA House of Delegates adopted, and has published, anesthesia policy and guidelines that are available online. Refer to the Methods of Anxiety and Pain Control section for select definitions from the policy and guidelines. Refer to the cited sources for complete and current information.
Anomaly	Deviation from the normal anatomic structure, growth, development or function; an abnormality.
ANSI/ADA/ISO	Acronyms for organizations that administer or develop national and international standards. American National Standards Institute (ANSI): the national organization established for the purpose of accrediting and coordinating product standards development activities in the United States. It is not a US government agency. American Dental Association (ADA): a national standards development organization accredited by ANSI. International Organization for Standardization (ISO): a worldwide federation of national standards bodies. The results of ISO technical work are published as International Standards. Efforts in the United States directed toward the development of ISO standards are channeled through ANSI.
Anterior	Mandibular and maxillary centrals, laterals, and cuspids. The designation of permanent anterior teeth in the Universal/ National tooth numbering system include teeth 6 through 11 (maxillary) and 22 through 27 (mandibular); primary teeth in the Universal/National tooth 2-4 numbering system are designated C through H (maxillary) and M through R (mandibular). Also refers to the teeth and tissues located towards the front of the mouth.
Anxiolysis	The diminution or elimination of anxiety.

Any Willing Provider	Legislation that requires managed care organizations (MCOs), such as health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and preferred provider organizations (PPOs), to contract with any providers who are willing to meet the terms of the contract.
Apex	The tip or end of the root end of the tooth.
Apexification	The process of induced root development to encourage the formation of a calcified barrier in a tooth with immature root formation or an open apex. May involve the placement of an artificial apical barrier prior to nonsurgical endodontic obturation.
Apexogenesis	Vital pulp therapy performed to encourage continued physiological formation and development of the tooth root.
Apicoectomy	Amputation of the apex of a tooth.
Appeal	A formal request that an insurer review denied or unpaid claims for services or supplies provided. An appeal can be filed by a healthcare provider or a patient in an attempt to recover reimbursement from a third-party payer such as a private insurance company.
Arch, dental	The curved composite structure of the natural dentition and the residual ridge, or the remains thereof, after the loss of some or all of the natural teeth.
Areas of Oral Cavity	A two-digit numeric system used to report regions of the oral cavity to third-party payers. 00 entire oral cavity 01 maxillary arch 02 mandibular arch 10 upper right quadrant 20 upper left quadrant 30 lower left quadrant 40 lower right quadrant
Arthrogram	A diagnostic X-ray technique used to view bone structures following injection of a contrast medium into a joint.
Artificial Crown	Restoration covering or replacing the major part or the whole of the clinical crown of a tooth or implant.
Autogenous Graft	Taken from one part of a patient's body and transferred to another.
Avulsion	Separation of a tooth from its socket due to trauma.

B

Term	Definition
Barrier Membrane	Usually a thin, sheet-like and usually non-autogenous material used in various surgical regenerative procedures.
Behavior Management	Techniques or therapies used to alter or control the actions of a patient who is receiving dental treatment (e.g., use of a papoose board, education, or anxiety relief techniques).

Benign	The mild or non-threatening character of an illness or the non-malignant character of a neoplasm.
Bicuspid	A premolar tooth; a tooth with two cusps.
Bilateral	Occurring on, or pertaining to, both right and left sides.
Biologic Materials	Agents that alter wound healing or host-tumor interaction. Such materials can include cytokines, growth factor, or vaccines, but do not include any actual hard or soft tissue graft material. These agents are added to graft material or used alone to effect acceleration of healing or regeneration in hard and soft tissue surgical procedures. Also known as biologic response modifiers.
Biopsy	Process of removing tissue for histologic evaluation.
Bitewing Radiograph	Interproximal radiographic view of the coronal portion of the tooth/teeth. A form of dental radiograph that may be taken with the long axis of the image oriented either horizontally or vertically, that reveals approximately the coronal halves of the maxillary and mandibular teeth and portions of the interdental alveolar septa on the same image.
Bleaching	Process of lightening the teeth, usually using a chemical oxidizing agent and sometimes in the presence of heat. Removal of deep seated intrinsic or acquired discolorations from crowns of vital and non-vital teeth through the use of chemicals, sometimes in combination with the application of heat and light. Bleaching has been achieved through short and long-term applications of pastes or solutions containing various concentrations of hydrogen peroxide and carbamide peroxide. Normally applied externally to teeth; may be used internally for endodontically treated teeth.
Bonding	Process by which two or more components are made integral by mechanical and/or chemical adhesion at their interface.
Bruxism	The parafunctional grinding of the teeth.
Buccal	Pertaining to or toward the cheek (e.g., the buccal surface of a posterior tooth).
Bundling of Procedures	The systematic combining of distinct dental procedure codes by third-party payers that results in a reduced benefit for the patient/beneficiary.

C

Term	Definition
Calculus	Hard deposit of mineralized substance adhering to crowns and/or roots of teeth or prosthetic devices.
Canal	A relatively narrow tubular passage or channel.
Cantilever Extension	Part of a fixed prosthesis that extends beyond the abutment to which it is attached and has no additional support.
Capitation	A capitation program is one in which a dentist or dentists' contract with the programs' sponsor or administrator to provide all or most of the dental services

	covered under the program to subscribers in return for payment on a per-capita basis.
Caries	Commonly used term for tooth decay.
Carious Lesion	A cavity caused by caries.
Cast	See diagnostic cast or study model.
Cavity	Missing tooth structure. A cavity may be due to decay, erosion, or abrasion. If caused by caries, also referred to as carious lesion.
Cement Base	Material used under a filling to replace lost tooth structure.
Cementum	Hard connective tissue covering the outer surface of a tooth root.
Cephalometric Image	A standardized, extraoral projection utilized in the scientific study of the measurements of the head.
Chronic Periradicular or Chronic Periapical Abscess	An inflammatory reaction to pulpal infection and necrosis characterized by gradual onset, little or no discomfort, and the intermittent discharge of pus through an associated sinus tract. May also be known as chronic alveolar abscess, chronic apical abscess, chronic dentoalveolar abscess, suppurative apical periodontitis, or suppurative periradicular periodontitis.
Cleft Palate	Congenital deformity resulting in lack of fusion of the soft and/or hard palate, either partial or complete.
Clenching	The clamping and pressing of the jaws and teeth together in centric occlusion, frequently associated with psychological stress or physical effort.
Clinical Crown	The portion of a tooth not covered by tissues.
Closed Reduction	The re-approximation of segments of a fractured bone without direct visualization of the bony segments.
Complete Denture	A prosthetic for the edentulous maxillary or mandibular arch, replacing the full dentition. Usually includes six anterior teeth and eight posterior teeth.
Complete Series	An entire set of radiographs; A set of intraoral radiographs usually consisting of 14 to 22 periapical and posterior bitewing images intended to display the crowns and roots of all teeth, periapical areas, and alveolar bone crest (source: FDA/ADA radiographic guidelines).
Composite	A dental restorative material made up of disparate or separate parts (e.g., resin and quartz particles).
Compound Fracture	Break in bone which is exposed to external contamination.
Consultation	In a dental setting, a diagnostic service provided by a dentist where the dentist, patient, or other parties (e.g., another dentist, physician, or legal guardian) discuss the patient's dental needs and proposed treatment modalities.
Contiguous	Adjacent; touching.
Coping	A thin covering of the coronal portion of the tooth usually without anatomic conformity. Custom made or prefabricated thimble-shaped core or base layer designed to fit over a natural tooth preparation, a post core, or implant abutment so as to act as a substructure onto which other components can be added to give final form to a restoration or prosthesis. It can be used as a definitive restoration or as part of a transfer procedure.

Core Buildup	The replacement of a part or all of the crown of a tooth whose purpose is to provide a base for the retention of an indirectly fabricated crown.
Coronal	Referring to the crown of a tooth.
Cosmetic Dentistry	Those services provided by dentists solely for the purpose of improving the appearance when form and function are satisfactory, and no pathologic conditions exist [source: ADA policy "Cosmetic Dentistry (1976:850)].
Cracked Tooth Syndrome	A collection of symptoms characterized by transient acute pain experienced when chewing.
Crown	An artificial replacement that restores missing tooth structure by surrounding the remaining coronal tooth structure, or that is placed on a dental implant. Made of metal, ceramic, or polymer materials, or a combination of such materials, and is retained by luting cement or mechanical means (American College of Prosthodontics; The Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms).
Crown Lengthening	A surgical procedure exposing more tooth for restorative purposes by apically positioning the gingival margin and removing supporting bone.
Culture and Sensitivity Test	Clinical laboratory test which identifies a microorganism and the ability of various antibiotics to control the microorganism.
Curettage	Scraping and cleaning the walls of a real or potential space, such as a gingival pocket or bone, to remove pathologic material.
Cusp	Pointed or rounded eminence on or near the masticating surface of a tooth.
Cuspid	Single cusped tooth located between the incisors and bicuspids.
Cyst	Pathological cavity, usually lined with epithelium, containing fluid or soft matter.
Cytology	The study of cells, including their anatomy, chemistry, physiology, and pathology.

D

Term	Definition
Debridement	Removal of subgingival and/or supragingival plaque and calculus which obstructs the ability to perform an evaluation.
Decay	The lay term for carious lesions in a tooth; decomposition of tooth structure.
Deciduous	Having the property of falling off or shedding; a term used to describe the primary teeth.
Deciduous Dentition	Refers to the deciduous or primary teeth in the dental arch.
Definitive Prosthesis	Prosthesis to be used over an extended period of time.
Dental Assessment	A limited clinical inspection that is performed to identify possible signs of oral or systemic disease, malformation, or injury, and the potential need for referral for diagnosis and treatment.
Dental Implant	A device specially designed to be placed surgically within or on the mandibular or maxillary bone as a means of providing for dental replacement.

Dental Prosthesis	Any device or appliance replacing one or more missing teeth and/or, if required, associated structures. This is a broad term which includes abutment crowns and abutment inlays/onlays, bridges, dentures, obturators, and gingival prostheses.
Dentin	Hard tissue which forms the bulk of the tooth and develops from the dental papilla and dental pulp, and in the mature state is mineralized.
Dentition	The teeth in the dental arch.
Denture	An artificial substitute for some or all of the natural teeth and adjacent tissues.
Denture Base	That part of a denture that makes contact with soft tissue and retains the artificial teeth.
Diagnostic Cast	A replica of teeth and adjoining tissues created digitally or by a casting process (e.g., plaster into an impression). "Study model" is another term used for such a replica. Diagnostic casts have various uses, most often the examination of relationships between oral tissues to determine how those relationships will affect form and function of a dental restoration or appliance being planned, or to determine whether tissue treatment or modification might be necessary before a pre-definitive impression is taken to ensure optimal performance of the planned restoration or appliance.
Diagnostic Imaging	A visual display of structural or functional patterns for the purpose of diagnostic evaluation. May be photographic or radiographic.
Diastema	A space, such as one between two adjacent teeth in the same dental arch.
Direct Pulp Cap	Procedure in which the exposed vital pulp is treated with a therapeutic material, followed with a base and restoration, to promote healing and maintain pulp vitality.
Direct Restoration	A restoration fabricated inside the mouth.
Discectomy	Excision of the intra-articular disc of a joint.
Displaced Tooth	A partial evulsion of a tooth; may be mesial, distal, facial, lingual, or incisal.
Distal	Surface or position of a tooth most distant from the median line of the arch.
Dressing	Medication, bandages, or other therapeutic material applied to a wound.
Dry Socket	Localized inflammation of the tooth socket following extraction due to infection or loss of blood clot; osteitis.

E

Term	Definition
Edentulous	Without teeth.
Edodontics	The branch of dentistry which is concerned with the morphology, physiology, and pathology of the human dental pulp and periradicular tissues. Its study and practice encompass the basic and clinical sciences including biology of the normal pulp, the etiology, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of diseases and injuries of the pulp and associated periradicular conditions.

Edodontist	A dental specialist who limits his/her practice to treating disease and injuries of the pulp and associated periradicular conditions.
Enamel	Hard calcified tissue covering dentin of the crown of the tooth.
Endosteal (Endosseous)	Device placed into the alveolar and basal bone of the mandible or maxilla and transecting only one cortical plate.
Eposteal (Subperiosteal)	Subperiosteal implant that conforms to the superior surface of an edentulous area of alveolar bone.
Equilibration	Reshaping of the occlusal surfaces of teeth to create harmonious contact relationships between the upper and lower teeth; also known as occlusal adjustment.
Established Patient	A patient who has received professional services from a dentist or another dentist of the same specialty who belongs to the same group practice, within the past three years, subject to state laws.
Evaluation	The patient assessment that may include gathering of information through interview, observation, examination, and use of specific tests that allow a dentist to diagnose existing conditions. Refer to specific oral evaluation code descriptors for more complete definitions.
Evidence-based Dentistry	An approach to oral health care that requires the judicious integration of systematic assessments of clinically relevant scientific data relating to the patient's oral and medical condition and history with the dentist's clinical expertise and the patient's treatment needs and preferences.
Evulsion	Separation of the tooth from its socket due to trauma.
Excision	Surgical removal of bone or tissue.
Exclusions	Dental services not covered under a dental benefit program.
Exfoliative	Refers to a thin layer of epidermis shed from the surface.
Exostosis	Overgrowth of bone.
Extracoronary	Outside the crown of a tooth.
Extraction	The process or act of removing a tooth or tooth parts.
Extraoral	Outside the oral cavity.
Exudate	A material usually resulting from inflammation or necrosis that contains fluid, cells, and/or other debris.

F

Term	Definition
Facial	The surface of a tooth directed toward the cheeks or lips (i.e., the buccal and labial surfaces) and opposite the lingual surface.
Fascial	Related to a sheet or band of fibrous connective tissue enveloping, separating, or binding together muscles, organs, and other soft tissue structures of the body.

Filling	A lay term used for the restoring of lost tooth structure by using materials such as metal, alloy, plastic, or porcelain.
Fixed Partial Denture	A prosthetic replacement of one or more missing teeth cemented or otherwise attached to the abutment teeth or implant replacements.
Fixed Prosthesis	Non-removable dental prosthesis which is solidly attached to abutment teeth, roots, or implants.
Fixed-removable Prosthesis	Combined prosthesis, one or more parts of which are fixed, and the other(s) attached by devices which allow their detachment, removal, and reinsertion by the dentist only.
Foramen	Natural opening into or through bone.
Fracture	The breaking of a part, especially of a bony structure; breaking of a tooth.
Frenum	Muscle fibers covered by a mucous membrane that attaches the cheek, lips, and or tongue to associated dental mucosa.
Furcation	The anatomic area of a multirooted tooth where the roots diverge.

G

Term	Definition
Genetic Test	Laboratory technique used to determine if a person has a genetic condition or disease or is likely to get the disease.
Gingiva	Soft tissues overlying the crowns of unerupted teeth and encircling the necks of those that have erupted.
Gingivectomy	The excision or removal of gingiva.
Gingivitis	Inflammation of gingival tissue without loss of connective tissue.
Gingivoplasty	Surgical procedure to reshape gingiva.
Glass Ionomer	Polyelectrolyte cement in which the solid powder phase is a fluoride-containing aluminosilicate glass powder to be mixed with polymeric carboxylic acid. The cement can be used to restore teeth, fill pits and fissures, lute, and line cavities. It is also known as glass polyalkenoate cement, ionic polymer cement, and polyelectrolyte cement.
Gold Foil	Thin pure gold leaf that is self-adhering when condensed into a cavity. One of the oldest restorative techniques, it is compacted or condensed into a retentive cavity form.
Graft	A piece of tissue or alloplastic material placed in contact with tissue to repair a defect or supplement a deficiency.
Guided Tissue Regeneration (GTR)	A surgical procedure that uses a barrier membrane placed under the gingival tissue and over the remaining bone support to enhance regeneration of new bone.

H

Term	Definition
Hemisection	Surgical separation of a multi-rooted tooth.
Histopathology	The study of disease processes at the cellular level.
Hyperplastic	Pertaining to an abnormal increase in the number of cells in an organ or a tissue with consequent enlargement.

I

Term	Definition
Imaging, diagnostic	This would include, but is not limited to, CAT scans, MRIs, photographs, radiographs, etc.
Immediate Denture	Prosthesis constructed for placement immediately after removal of remaining natural teeth.
Impacted Tooth	An unerupted or partially erupted tooth that is positioned against another tooth, bone, or soft tissue so that complete eruption is unlikely.
Implant	Material inserted or grafted into tissue.
Implantation, tooth	Placement of an artificial or natural tooth into an alveolus.
Incisal	Pertaining to the biting edges of the incisor and cuspid teeth.
Incisal Angle	One of the angles formed by the junction of the incisal and the mesial or distal surfaces of an anterior tooth; called the mesioincisal and distoincisal angle respectfully.
Incision and Drainage	The procedure of incising a fluctuant mucosal lesion to allow for the release of fluid from the lesion.
Incisor	A tooth for cutting or gnawing; located in the front of the mouth in both jaws.
Indirect Pulp Cap	Procedure in which the nearly exposed pulp is covered with a protective dressing to protect the pulp from additional injury and to promote healing and repair via formation of secondary dentin.
Indirect Restoration	A restoration fabricated outside the mouth.
Inlay	An intracoronal dental restoration, made outside the oral cavity to conform to the prepared cavity, which restores some of the occlusal surface of a tooth, but does not restore any cusp tips. It is retained by luting cement (American College of Prosthodontics; The Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms)
Intentional Reimplantation	The intentional removal, radicular repair, and replacement of a tooth into its alveolus.
Interim Prosthesis	A provisional prosthesis designed for use over a limited period of time, after which it is to be replaced by a more definitive restoration.
Interproximal	Between the adjoining surfaces of adjacent teeth in the same arch.

Intracoronal	Referring to "within" the crown of a tooth.
Intraoral	Inside the mouth.

J

Term	Definition
Jaw	A common name for either the maxilla or the mandible.

K

Term	Definition
Keratin	A protein present in all cuticular structures of the body, such as hair, epidermis, and horns.
Keratinized Gingiva	The oral surface of the gingiva extending from the mucogingival junction to the gingival margin. In gingival health, the coronal portion of the sulcular epithelium may also be keratinized.

L

Term	Definition
Labial	Pertaining to or around the lip.
Laminate Veneer	A thin covering of the facial surface of a tooth, usually constructed of tooth colored material used to restore discolored, damaged, misshapen, or misaligned teeth.
Lesion	An injury or wound; area of diseased tissue.
Line Angle	An angle formed by the junction of two planes; used to designate the junction of two surfaces of a tooth, or of two walls of a tooth cavity preparation.
Lingual	Pertaining to or around the tongue; surface of the tooth directed toward the tongue; opposite of facial.

M

Term	Definition
Maintenance, periodontal	Therapy for preserving the state of health of the periodontium.

Malar	Pertaining to the cheek bone; see zygomatic bone.
Malignant	Having the properties of dysplasia, invasion, and metastasis.
Malocclusion	Improper alignment of biting or chewing surfaces of upper and lower teeth.
Mandible	The lower jaw.
Mandibular Canal	The passage which transmits vessels and nerves through the jaw to branches that distribute them to the teeth.
Maryland Bridge	Fixed partial denture featuring conservative retainers which are resin bonded to abutments.
Maxilla	The upper jaw.
Mesial	Nearer the middle line of the body or the surface of a tooth nearer the center of the dental arch.
Microabrasion	Mechanical removal of a small amount of tooth structure to eliminate superficial enamel discoloration defects.
Microorganisms	A minute living organism, such as a bacterium, fungus, yeast, virus, or rickettsia.
Molar	Teeth posterior to the premolars (bicuspid) on either side of the jaw; grinding teeth, having large crowns and broad chewing surfaces.
Moulage	A positive reproduction of a body part formed on a cast from a negative impression.
Mouthguard	Individually molded device designed primarily to be worn for the purpose of helping prevent injury to the teeth and their surrounding tissues. Sometimes called a mouth protector.
Mucous Membrane	Lining of the oral cavity as well as other canals and cavities of the body; also called "mucosa."

N

Term	Definition
Necessary Treatment	A necessary dental procedure or service as determined by a dentist, to either establish or maintain a patient's oral health. Such determinations are based on the professional diagnostic judgment of the dentist, and the standards of care that prevail in the professional community.
Non-autogenous	A graft from donor other than patient
Noncontributory Program	A method of payment for group coverage in which the sponsor pays the entire monthly premium for the program.

O

Term	Definition
Obturate	With reference to endodontics, refers to the sealing of the canal(s) of tooth roots during root canal therapy procedure with an appropriately prescribed material such as gutta percha in combination with a suitable luting agent.
Obturator	A disc or plate which closes an opening; a prosthesis that closes an opening in the palate.
Occlusal	Pertaining to the biting surfaces of the premolar and molar teeth or contacting surfaces of opposing teeth or opposing occlusion rims.
Occlusal Radiograph	An intraoral radiograph made with the film, phosphorous plate, emulsion or digital sensor being held between the occluded teeth.
Occlusal Surface	A surface of a posterior tooth or occlusion rim that is intended to make contact with an opposing occlusal surface (The Journal of Prosthodontic Dentistry; The Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms; July 2005, page 57).
Occlusion	Any contact between biting or chewing surfaces of maxillary (upper) and mandibular (lower) teeth.
Odontogenic	Refers to tooth-forming tissues.
Odontogenic Cyst	Cyst derived from the epithelium of odontogenic tissue (developmental, primordial).
Odontoplasty	Adjustment of tooth length, size, and/or shape; includes removal of enamel projections.
Onlay	A dental restoration made outside the oral cavity that covers one or more cusp tips and adjoining occlusal surfaces, but not the entire external surface. It is retained by luting cement (American College of Prosthodontics; The Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms).
Open Reduction	Re-approximation of fractured bony segments accomplished through cutting the adjacent soft tissues and bone to allow direct access.
Operculectomy	Removal of the operculum.
Operculum	The flap of tissue over an unerupted or partially erupted tooth.
Oral	Pertaining to the mouth.
Oral and Maxillofacial Pathologist	A dental specialist whose practice is concerned with recognition, diagnosis, investigation, and management of diseases of the oral cavity, jaws, and adjacent structures.
Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology	Oral pathology is the specialty of dentistry and discipline of pathology that deals with the nature, identification, and management of diseases affecting the oral and maxillofacial regions. It is a science that investigates the causes, processes, and effects of these diseases. The practice of oral pathology includes research and diagnosis of diseases using clinical, radiographic, microscopic, biochemical, or other examinations.
Oral and Maxillofacial Radiologist	A dental specialist whose practice is concerned with the production and interpretation of images and data produced by all modalities of radiant energy

	used for the diagnosis and management of diseases, disorders, and conditions of the oral and maxillofacial region.
Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology	Oral and maxillofacial radiology is the specialty of dentistry and discipline of radiology concerned with the production and interpretation of images and data produced by all modalities of radiant energy that are used for the diagnosis and management of diseases, disorders, and conditions of the oral and maxillofacial region.
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon	A dental specialist whose practice is limited to the diagnosis, surgical and adjunctive treatment of diseases, injuries, deformities, defects, and esthetic aspects of the oral and maxillofacial regions.
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	Oral and maxillofacial surgery is the specialty of dentistry which includes the diagnosis, surgical and adjunctive treatment of diseases, injuries, and defects involving both the functional and esthetic aspects of the hard and soft tissues of the oral and maxillofacial region.
Oral Diagnosis	The determination by a dentist of the oral health condition of an individual patient achieved through the evaluation of data gathered by means of history taking, direct examination, patient conference, and such clinical aids and tests as may be necessary in the judgment of the dentist.
Oral Health Literacy	The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate oral health decisions.
Orthodontic Retainer	Appliance to stabilize teeth following orthodontic treatment.
Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics	Orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics is the dental specialty that includes the diagnosis, prevention, interception, and correction of malocclusion, as well as neuromuscular and skeletal abnormalities of the developing or mature orofacial structures.
Orthodontist	A dental specialist whose practice is limited to the interception and treatment of malocclusion and other neuromuscular and skeletal abnormalities of the teeth and their surrounding structures.
Orthognathic	Functional relationship of maxilla and mandible.
Orthotic Device	Apparatus used to support, align, prevent, or correct deformities, or to improve the function of movable parts of the body.
Osteoplasty	Surgical procedure that modifies the configuration of bone.
Osteotomy	Surgical cutting of bone.
Overdenture	A removable prosthetic device that overlies and may be supported by retained tooth roots or implants.

P

Term	Definition
Palate	The hard and soft tissues forming the roof of the mouth that separates the oral and nasal cavities.

Palliative	Action that relieves pain but is not curative.
Panoramic Radiograph	An extraoral projection whereby the entire mandible, maxilla, teeth, and other nearby structures are portrayed on a single image, as if the jaws were flattened out.
Papoose Board	A behavior management technique utilizing immobilization to control the actions of a patient who is receiving dental treatment.
Parafunctional	Other than normal function or use.
Partial Denture	Usually refers to a prosthetic device that replaces missing teeth. See fixed partial denture or removable partial denture.
Pediatric Dentist	A dental specialist whose practice is limited to treatment of children from birth through adolescence, providing primary and comprehensive preventive and therapeutic oral health care; formerly known as a pedodontist.
Pediatric Dentistry	Pediatric Dentistry is an age-defined specialty that provides both primary and comprehensive preventive and therapeutic oral health care for infants and children through adolescence, including those with special health care needs.
Periapical	The area surrounding the end of the tooth root.
Periapical Cyst	An apical inflammatory cyst containing a sac-like epithelium-lined cavity that is open to and continuous with the root canal.
Periapical Radiograph	A radiograph made by the intraoral placement of film, phosphorous plate, emulsion, or digital sensor, for disclosing the apices of the teeth.
Pericoronal	Around the crown of a tooth.
Periodontal	Pertaining to the supporting and surrounding tissues of the teeth.
Periodontal Disease	Inflammatory process of the gingival tissues and/or periodontal membrane of the teeth, resulting in an abnormally deep gingival sulcus, possibly producing periodontal pockets and loss of supporting alveolar bone.
Periodontal Pocket	Pathologically deepened gingival sulcus; a feature of periodontal disease.
Periodontics	Periodontics is the specialty of dentistry which encompasses the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases of the supporting and surrounding tissues of the teeth or their substitutes and the maintenance of the health, function, and esthetics of these structures and tissues.
Periodontist	A dental specialist whose practice is limited to the treatment of diseases of the supporting and surrounding tissues of the teeth.
Periodontitis	Inflammation and loss of the connective tissue of the supporting or surrounding structure of teeth with loss of attachment.
Periodontium	A tissue complex comprising gingival, cementum, periodontal ligament, and alveolar bone which attaches, nourishes, and supports the tooth.
Periradicular	Surrounding a portion of the root of the tooth.
Permanent Dentition	Refers to the permanent or adult teeth in the dental arch.
Pin	A small metal rod, cemented or driven into dentin to aid in retention of a restoration.
Plaque	A soft, sticky substance that accumulates on teeth composed largely of bacteria and bacterial derivatives.
Pontic	The term used for an artificial tooth on a fixed partial denture (bridge).

Porcelain/ceramic	Refers to pressed, fired, polished, or milled materials containing predominantly inorganic refractory compounds including porcelains, glasses, ceramics, and glassceramics.
Post	Rod-like component designed to be inserted into a prepared root canal space so as to provide structural support. This device can either be in the form of an alloy, carbon fiber, or fiberglass, and posts are usually secured with appropriate luting agents.
Posterior	Refers to teeth and tissues towards the back of the mouth (distal to the canines); maxillary and mandibular premolars and molars. The designation of permanent posterior teeth in the Universal/National tooth numbering system include teeth 1 through 5 and 12 through 16 (maxillary), and 17 through 21 and 28 through 32 (mandibular); primary teeth in the Universal tooth numbering system are designated A, B, I and J (maxillary), and K, L, S and T (mandibular).
Precision Attachment	Interlocking device, having a male component integrated into a removable prosthesis that fits precisely into a female component embedded in the body of abutment teeth or implant abutments, to stabilize or retain the prosthesis when it is seated in the mouth.
Premedication	The use of medications prior to dental procedures.
Preventive Dentistry	Aspects of dentistry concerned with promoting good oral health and function by preventing or reducing the onset and/or development of oral diseases or deformities and the occurrence of oro-facial injuries.
Primary Dentition	The first set of teeth.
Prophylaxis	Removal of plaque, calculus, and stains from the tooth structures. It is intended to control local irritational factors.
Prosthesis	Artificial replacement of any part of the body.
Prosthetic Retainer	A part of a prosthesis that attaches a restoration to the abutment tooth, implant abutment, or implant.
Prosthodontics	The dental specialty pertaining to the diagnosis, treatment planning, rehabilitation, and maintenance of the oral function, comfort, appearance, and health of patients with clinical conditions associated with missing or deficient teeth and/or oral and maxillofacial tissues using biocompatible substitutes.
Prosthodontist	A dental specialist whose practice is limited to the restoration of the natural teeth and/or the replacement of missing teeth with artificial substitutes.
Provisional	Formed or preformed for temporary purposes or used over a limited period; a temporary or interim solution; usually refers to a prosthesis or individual tooth restoration.
Pulp	Connective tissue that contains blood vessels and nerve tissue which occupies the pulp cavity of a tooth.
Pulp Cavity	The space within a tooth which contains the pulp.
Pulpectomy	Complete removal of vital and non-vital pulp tissue from the root canal space.
Pulpitis	Inflammation of the dental pulp.

Pulpotomy	Removal of a portion of the pulp, including the diseased aspect, with the intent of maintaining the vitality of the remaining pulpal tissue by means of a therapeutic dressing.
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Q

Term	Definition
Quadrant	One of the four equal sections into which the dental arches can be divided; begins at the midline of the arch and extends distally to the last tooth.

R

Term	Definition
Radicular	Pertaining to the root.
Radiograph	An image or picture produced on a radiation sensitive film, phosphorous plate, emulsion, or digital sensor by exposure to ionizing radiation.
Radiographic/ Surgical Implant Index	An appliance, designed to relate osteotomy or fixture position to existing anatomic structures.
Rebase	Process of refitting a denture by replacing the base material.
Recalcification	Procedure used to encourage biologic root repair of external and internal resorption defects. See apexification.
Reimplantation, tooth	The return of a tooth to its alveolus.
Reline	Process of resurfacing the tissue side of a removable prosthesis with new base material.
Removable Partial Denture	A prosthetic replacement of one or more missing teeth that can be removed by the patient.
Removable Prosthesis	Complete or partial prosthesis, which after an initial fitting by a dentist, can be removed and reinserted by the patient.
Residual Root	Remaining root structure following the loss of the major portion (over 75%) of the crown.
Resin, Acrylic	Resinous material of the various esters of acrylic acid, used as a denture base material, for trays or for other restorations.
Resin Infiltration	Application of a resin material engineered to penetrate and fill the sub-surface pore system of an incipient caries lesion to strengthen, stabilize, and limit the lesion's progression, as well as mask visible white spots.
Retrograde Filling	A method of sealing the root canal by preparing and filling it from the root apex.
Revision	The act of revising; second or more surgical procedure for correction of a condition.

Root	The anatomic portion of the tooth that is covered by cementum and is located in the alveolus (socket) where it is attached by the periodontal apparatus; radicular portion of tooth.
Root Canal	The portion of the pulp cavity inside the root of a tooth; the chamber within the root of the tooth that contains the pulp. Space inside the root portion of a tooth containing pulp tissue.
Root Canal Therapy	The treatment of disease and injuries of the pulp and associated periradicular conditions.
Root Planning	A definitive treatment procedure designed to remove cementum and/or dentin that is rough, may be permeated by calculus, or contaminated with toxins or microorganisms.
Rubber Dam	A barrier technique used to prevent the passage of saliva or moisture, or to provide an isolated operative field.

S

Term	Definition
Salivary Gland	Exocrine glands that produce saliva and empty it into the mouth; these include the parotid glands, the submandibular glands, and the sublingual glands.
Scaling	Removal of plaque, calculus, and stain from teeth.
Sealant	A resinous material designed to be applied to the occlusal surfaces of posterior teeth to prevent occlusal caries.
Sedative Filling	A temporary restoration intended to relieve pain.
Semi-precision Attachment	A device, one component of which is fixed to an abutment or abutments and the other is integrated into a fixed or removable prosthesis in order to stabilize and/or retain it.
Sextant	One of the six relatively equal sections into which a dental arch can be divided (e.g., tooth numbers 1-5; 6-11; 12-16; 17-21; 22-27; 28-32). Sometimes used for recording periodontal charting.
Sialodochoplasty	Surgical procedure for the repair of a defect and/or restoration of portion of a salivary gland duct.
Sialography	Inspection of the salivary ducts and glands by radiograph after the injection of a radiopaque medium.
Sialolithotomy	Surgical procedure by which a stone within a salivary gland or its duct is removed, either intraorally or extraorally.
Site	A term used to describe a single area, position, or locus. For periodontal procedures, an area of soft tissue recession on a single tooth or an osseous defect adjacent to a single tooth; also used to indicate soft tissue defects and/or osseous defects in edentulous tooth positions.
Space Maintainer	A passive appliance, usually cemented in place, that holds teeth in position.

Splint	A device used to support, protect, or immobilize oral structures that have been loosened, replanted, fractured, or traumatized. Also refers to devices used in the treatment of temporomandibular joint disorders.
Stomatitis	Inflammation of the membranes of the mouth.
Stop-loss	A general term referring to the category of coverage that provides insurance protection (reinsurance) to an employer for a self-funded plan.
Stress Breaker	The part of a tooth-borne and/or tissue-borne prosthesis designed to relieve the abutment teeth and their supporting tissues from harmful stresses.
Study Model	Plaster or stone model of teeth and adjoining tissues; also referred to as diagnostic cast. See diagnostic cast.
Succedaneous Tooth	A permanent tooth that replaces a primary (deciduous) tooth.
Supernumerary Teeth	Extra erupted or unerupted teeth that resemble teeth of normal shape.
Suture	Stitch used to repair incision or wound.

T

Term	Definition
Temporary Removable Denture	An interim prosthesis designed for use over limited period of time.
Temporomandibular (TMJ)	The connecting hinge mechanism between the base of the skull (temporal bone) and the lower jaw (mandible).
Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMD or TMDJ)	Abnormal functioning of temporomandibular joint; also refers to symptoms arising in other areas secondary to the dysfunction.
Therapeutic	Of or pertaining to therapy or treatment; beneficial. Therapy has as its goal the elimination or control of a disease or other abnormal state.
Tissue Conditioning	Material intended to be placed in contact with tissues, for a limited period, with the aim of assisting the return to a healthy condition.
Tomography	An X-ray technique that produces an image representing a detailed cross section of tissue structures at a predetermined depth.
Tooth Bounded Space	A space created by one or more missing teeth that has a tooth on each side.
Torus	A bony elevation or protuberance of bone.
Tracheotomy	A surgical procedure to create an opening in the trachea (windpipe) to aid in breathing.
Transitional	Relating to a passage or change from one position, state, phase, or concept to another.
Transitional Dentition	Refers to a mixed dentition; begins with the appearance of the permanent first molars and ends with the exfoliation of the deciduous teeth.
Transosteal (Transosseous)	Device with threaded posts penetrating both the superior and inferior cortical bone plates of the mandibular symphysis and exiting through the perimucosa. It may be intraoral or extraoral.

Transplantation	Surgical placement of biological material from one site to another.
Transplantation of Tooth	Transfer of a tooth from one socket to another, either in the same or a different person.
Transseptal	Through or across a septum.
Treatment Plan	The sequential guide for the patient's care as determined by the dentist's diagnosis and is used by the dentist for the restoration to and/or maintenance of optimal oral health.
Trismus	Restricted ability to open the mouth, usually due to inflammation or fibrosis of the muscles of mastication.
Tuberosity	A protuberance on a bone.

U

Term	Definition
Unerupted	Tooth/teeth that have not penetrated into the oral cavity.
Unilateral	One-sided; pertaining to or affecting but one side.

V

Term	Definition
Vertical Bitewing	A dental image with a central projection on which the teeth can close, holding it in a vertical position for the radiographic examination of several upper and lower teeth simultaneously.
Vertical Dimension	The vertical height of the face with the teeth in occlusion or acting as stops.
Vestibuloplasty	Any of a series of surgical procedures designed to increase relative alveolar ridge height.
Viral Culture	A collection of specimen for the purpose of incubating a virus for identification.

W

Term	Definition
Wax Pattern	A wax form that is the positive likeness of an object to be fabricated.

X

Term	Definition
X-ray	See radiograph.
Xerostomia	Decreased salivary secretion that produces a dry and sometimes burning sensation of the oral mucosa and/or cervical caries.

Y

Term	Definition
Yeast	A general term for a fungus occurring as a, unicellular, nucleated organism that usually reproduces by budding. Some yeasts may reproduce by fission, many producing mycelia or pseudomycelia.

Z

Term	Definition
Zygomatic Bone	Quadrangular bone on either side of face that forms the cheek prominence. See malar.

Methods of Anxiety and Pain Control

Term	Definition
Analgesia	The diminution or elimination of pain.
Deep Sedation	A drug-induced depression of consciousness during which patients cannot be easily aroused but respond purposefully following repeated or painful stimulation. The ability to independently maintain ventilatory function may be impaired. Patients may require assistance in maintaining a patent airway, and spontaneous ventilation may be inadequate. Cardiovascular function is usually maintained.
General Anesthesia	A drug-induced loss of consciousness during which patients are not arousable, even by painful stimulation. The ability to independently maintain ventilatory function is often impaired. Patients often require assistance in maintaining a patent airway, and positive pressure ventilation may be required because of depressed spontaneous ventilation or drug-induced depression of neuromuscular function. Cardiovascular function may be impaired.
Local Anesthesia	The elimination of sensation, especially pain, in one part of the body by the topical application or regional injection of a drug.
Minimal Sedation	A minimally depressed level of consciousness, produced by a pharmacological method, that retains the patient's ability to independently and continuously maintain an airway and respond normally to tactile stimulation and verbal command. Although cognitive function and coordination may be modestly impaired, ventilatory and cardiovascular functions are unaffected.
Moderate Sedation	A drug-induced depression of consciousness during which patients respond purposefully to verbal commands, either alone or accompanied by light tactile stimulation. No interventions are required to maintain a patent airway, and spontaneous ventilation is adequate. Cardiovascular function is usually maintained.

Routes of Administration

Term	Definition
Enteral	Any technique of administration in which the agent is absorbed through the gastrointestinal (GI) tract or oral mucosa (i.e., oral, rectal, sublingual).
Inhalation	A technique of administration in which a gaseous or volatile agent is introduced into the lungs and whose primary effect is due to absorption through the gas/blood interface.

Parenteral	A technique of administration in which the drug bypasses the gastrointestinal (GI) tract (i.e., intramuscular [IM], intravenous [IV], intranasal [IN], submucosal [SM], subcutaneous [SC], intraosseous [IO].)
Transdermal	Technique of administration in which the drug is administered by patch or iontophoresis through skin.
Transmucosal	A technique of administration in which the drug is administered across mucosa such as intranasal, sublingual, or rectal.

Classification of metals

The noble metal classification system has been adopted as a more precise method of reporting various alloys used in dentistry. The alloys are defined on the basis of the percentage of metal content and listed in order of biocompatibility.

Term	Definition
High Noble Alloys	Noble Metal Content > 60% (gold + platinum group*) and gold > 40% Au)
Titanium and Titanium Alloys	Titanium (Ti) > 85%
Noble Alloys	Noble Metal Content > 25% (gold + platinum group*)
Predominantly Base Alloys	Noble Metal Content) < 25% (gold + platinum group*)

*Metals of the platinum group are platinum, palladium, rhodium, osmium and ruthenium.

Section 3 – Frequently Used Systems in a Dental Practice

There are many additional software and systems utilized in a practice for assisting in managing the business, internal and external communication with patients, insurance companies, and other health care providers.

Term	Definition
Customer Relationship Software (CRM)	<p>To assist and communicate with patients, a practice can purchase additional software that attaches to the Practice Management Software on the main server. On the outbound communication side, the software will automatically send patients appointment reminders via text message and email. It will also allow two-way text messaging, mass texting (in the event of unscheduled office closure, you can text the patients scheduled that day), and happy birthday messages. It will also send out after appointment links for patients to write positive reviews on Google and Yelp. Internally, the software helps the leadership team evaluate statistics on new patients appointments, reviews, platforms (e.g., email/text) is being utilized, and much more. Some of the most common CRM software systems on the market includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weave • Lighthouse 360 • Solution Reach • DDS Dashboard • Doctible
Encrypted Email	<p>In addition to the use of a Practice Management and CRM software, the office will need to have an encrypted software system to communicate HIPAA protected information with other offices. After the initial set up, the office can send chart notes, X-rays, and narrative reports. Some of the most common encrypted software systems on the market includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft 365 • Idetellect • Proton Mail • PBHS • Bright Squid
Insurance Claims Clearing House	<p>Using a dental practice management software allows for the uploading of dental claims after a patient has rendered services. After the service has been completed, the practice management software will generate a digital claim form for the patient to be uploaded using a “PAYER ID”. This ID allows the clearing house who first receives the claim, to identify which insurance company the claim needs to be sent to. Simply uploading the claim to the clearing house allows for timely claim filing and, therefore, prompt payment from the insurance company. Listed below are some common clearing houses used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental Exchange • Astra Practice Partners

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renaissance • E-claims – Eaglesoft • Apex EDI
NEA Attachment	An additional software that allows the claim to have additional supportive documentation attached to the claim for review. Radiographs, intra-oral photos, chart notes, and narrative reports are examples of documents that may need to be submitted with the claim.
Practice Management Software	<p>The primary software system you will learn is the practice management software for the office. There are multiple different software systems available on the market for dental providers, and each has its own unique way of managing the data for the practice. The purpose is to manage accounts, run schedules, generate statistics, track insurance claims, and track production, collections, write-offs, accounts receivable and much more. Some of the most popular software systems used today are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dentrix • Eaglesoft • DAISY • Open Dental • Easy Dental

Resources

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