

## Defining Oral Health Services and Providers

The CCO Oregon Dental and Oral Health workgroup knows that “oral” and “dental” are often used interchangeably when referring to services and provider types. This can lead to misaligned expectations and contracting confusion. In an effort to clarify terms and foster better understanding with primary care, behavioral health, and other provider types, oral health may seek integrative partnerships with, our workgroup reviewed existing definitions of oral and dental health from state, national, and international resources. Upon this review, the workgroup gravitated towards the FDI World Dental Federation definition of oral health.

In 2016, the FDI World Dental Federation adopted a definition of oral health that is broader than healthy teeth and gums by considering the impact of bad oral health on overall quality of life for the patient. Working from this definition of oral health, dental health services and providers are those requiring further dental education and certification and often called out in state and federal rule and statute, CMS reporting guidelines, measure specifications, and service delivery contracts.

### [FDI World Dental Federation's definition of oral health](#)

Oral health is multifaceted and includes the ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow, and convey a range of emotions through facial expressions with confidence and without pain, discomfort, and disease of the craniofacial complex. Further attributes of oral health:

- It is a fundamental component of health and physical and mental well-being. It exists along a continuum influenced by the values and attitudes of people and communities.
- It reflects the physiological, social, and psychological attributes that are essential to the quality of life.
- It is influenced by the person's changing experiences, perceptions, expectations, and ability to adapt to circumstances.

**Framework for the Oral Health Definition**

