

## APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY OF DENTAL TERMS

To help you better understand your benefits under the Dental Plan, the following is a glossary of common dental terms.

**Abutment:** a terminal tooth or root that retains or supports a bridge or a fixed or removed prosthesis.

**Anesthesia:** the condition produced by the administration of specific agents to a patient to minimize or avoid pain response. *Local* anesthesia achieves the loss of conscious pain response in a specific location or area of the body. *General* anesthesia renders the patient completely unconscious and completely without conscious pain response.

**Anesthetic:** a drug that produces loss of feeling of sensation either generally or locally.

**Appliance:** a device used to provide function or therapeutic (healing) effect. A *fixed* appliance is one that is cemented to the teeth or attached by adhesive materials. A *prosthetic* appliance is one that is used to provide replacement for a missing tooth.

**Bitewing:** a dental X-ray showing approximately the coronal (crown) halves of the upper and lower jaw.

**Bridgework:** a type of partial denture. *Fixed* bridgework is a partial denture retained with crowns or inlays cemented to natural teeth, which are used as abutments. *Fixed-removable* bridgework is one that the dentist can remove, but the patient cannot. *Removable* bridgework is a partial denture retained by attachments, which permit removal of the denture. Bridgework is normally held by clasps.

**Caries:** decay of a tooth.

**Covered Orthodontic Expenses:** an expense incurred for **covered** orthodontic services and supplies given to a **covered** person; while the person is a **covered** person. These expenses are subject to the limitations and exclusions of the Dental Plan and the terms of the fee schedule.

**Crown:** the portion of a tooth covered by enamel.

**Dental hygienist:** a person who has been trained and licensed to remove calcareous deposits and stains from the surfaces of the teeth and to provide additional services and information on the prevention of oral disease under the direction of a dentist.

**Dentist:** a legally qualified dentist. Also a **physician** who is licensed to do the dental work he or she performs.

**Denture:** a device replacing missing teeth.

**Fixed bridge:** a prosthesis that replaces one or several teeth and which is cemented in place in the mouth. It consists of one or more pontics held in place by one or more retainers on the abutment teeth.

**Fluoride:** a solution of fluorine, which is applied topically to the teeth for the purpose of preventing dental decay.

**Impression:** a negative reproduction of a given area. For example, in bridgework, this may be an impression of a tooth (abutment) that has been prepared for an inlay or crown.

**Inlay:** a restoration made to fit a prepared tooth cavity and then cemented into place.

**Malocclusion:** an abnormal relation to the opposing teeth when brought into habitual opposition.

**Malposition:** faulty position of teeth.

**Necessary:** a service or supply furnished by a **dentist** is necessary if the **Claims Administrator** determines that it is appropriate for the diagnosis, the care or the treatment of the disease or injury involved.

**Non-participating dental provider:** a **dentist** who has not entered into a written agreement with the **Claims Administrator** (see "Important Contacts") to provide Dental Plan coverage to **covered** persons.

**Onlay:** an occlusal restoration that is extended to cover the entire biting surface of the tooth. It often is used to restore lost tooth structure and increase height of tooth.

**Orthodontics:** the branch of dentistry primarily concerned with the detection, prevention and correction of abnormalities in the positioning of teeth in their relationship to the jaws. Commonly, straightening teeth.

**Orthodontic treatment:** any medical service or supply; or dental service or supply furnished to prevent, diagnose or correct a misalignment of the teeth, bite or jaws or jaw joint relationship whether or not for the purpose of relieving pain. The installation of a space maintainer or a surgical procedure to correct malocclusion is not orthodontic treatment.

**Partial denture:** a prosthesis that replaces one or more, but less than all, of the natural teeth and associated structures and that is supported by the teeth and/or the gums; may be removable or fixed, one side or two sides.

**Participating dental provider:** a **dentist** who has entered into a written agreement with the **Claims Administrator** (see "Important Contacts") to provide dental care described under the Dental Plan to **covered** persons.

**Participating specialist dentist:** a **dentist** who, by virtue of advanced training, is board eligible or certified by a Specialty Board as being qualified to practice in a special field of dentistry, and who has entered into a written agreement with the **Claims Administrator** (see “Important Contacts”) to provide the dental care described under the Dental Plan to **covered** persons.

**Primary Care Dentist:** a **participating dental provider** currently chosen by you to provide dental care to a **covered** person.

**Periapical:** the enclosing or surrounding of the tissues and bony sockets of the teeth.

**Pontic:** the part of a fixed bridge that is suspended between the abutments and that replaces a missing tooth or teeth.

**Prophylaxis:** the cleaning of the teeth by a dentist or dental hygienist through the removal of tartar and stains.

**Prosthesis:** an artificial replacement of one or more natural teeth and/or associated structures.

**Restoration:** a broad term applied to any inlay, crown, bridge, partial denture or complete denture that restores or replaces loss of tooth structure, teeth or oral tissue. The term applies to the end result of repairing and restoring or reforming the shape, form and function of part or all of a tooth or teeth.

**Root canal/endodontic therapy:** treatment of a tooth having a damaged pulp. This is usually performed by completely removing the pulp, sterilizing the pulp chamber and root canals, and filling these spaces with sealing material.

**Scale:** the removal of calculus (tartar) and stains from teeth with special instruments.

**Sealants:** mechanically and/or chemically prepared enamel surface sealed to prevent decay.

**Topical:** the painting of the surface of teeth, as in fluoride treatment, or the application of a cream-like anesthetic formula to the surface of the gum.