



دائرة الصحة
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

ORAL HEALTH POLICY FOR THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI

March 2019

PUBLIC

عام



Document Title:	Oral Health Policy for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi		
Document Ref. Number:	Policy/OHP/0.9	Version	0.9
Publication Date:	March 2019		
For Further Advice Contact:	DOH Strategy Division		
Applies To:	This Policy applies to all the population, all DOH licensed healthcare facilities, dental professionals and insurers.		
Effective Date:	The effective date of this Policy will be the date of its publication to the Abu Dhabi Health Sector.		
Document Classification	Public		
Document Owner/Control	DOH Strategy Division		



ABOUT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH)

The Department of Health (DOH) is the regulatory body of the Health System in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and seeks excellence in Health for the community by regulating and monitoring the health status of the population. DOH defines the strategy for the health system, monitors and analyses the health status of the population and performance of the system. In addition, DOH shapes the regulatory framework for the health system, inspects against regulations, enforce regulations, and encourages the adoption of best practices and performance targets by all health service providers. DOH also drives programs to increase awareness and adoption of healthy living standards among the residents of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in addition to regulating scope of services, premiums and reimbursement rates of the health system in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The Health System of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is comprehensive, encompasses the full spectrum of health services and is accessible to all residents of Abu Dhabi. The health system encompasses, providers, professionals, patients, Insurers and the regulator. Providers of health services include public and private services and the system is financed through mandatory health insurance (with the exception to Thiqa) and has three main sources of financing: Employers or Sponsors, the Government and Individuals. The Health Insurance scheme places responsibilities on any Insurer, Broker, Third Party Administrator, Health Provider, Employer, Sponsor (including educational establishments), Limited Income Investors and Insured Persons to participate in the Health Insurance Scheme.



Table of Content

1. Introduction	5
2. Definitions.....	7
3. Purpose of This Policy.....	8
4. Scope	8
5. Vision, Goal and Guiding Principles	8
5.1 Vision	8
5.2 Goal.....	8
5.3 Guiding Principles.....	8
6. Policy Priorities, Objectives and Strategies	10
6.1 Policy Priority 1: Community Oral Health Promotion and Prevention	11
6.2 Policy Priority 2: Service Model Delivery of Oral Healthcare.....	10
6.3 Policy Priority 3: Oral Health Research	13
6.4 Policy Priority 4: Workforce Planning and Development.....	14
7. Enforcement and Sanctions	16
8. Monitoring and Evaluation.....	16

1. Introduction

Oral diseases and conditions have a major impact on individuals and communities, health systems, economies and the society. Consequences of oral disease on individuals are both physiological and psychosocial. FDI states that oral diseases affect 3.9 billion people globally, yet despite their magnitude awareness of oral disease remains low.¹ In addition, behavioral risk factors for oral diseases and conditions are shared with other major non-communicable diseases. As a result, although oral disease is one of the most common non-communicable diseases (NCDs) worldwide it does not get the necessary attention. This calls for action from the health systems to be responsive to the oral health needs of their population and to ensure its accessibility to all.

Availability of oral healthcare services within the Abu Dhabi Healthcare System plays a key role in maintaining and improving the population's oral health and in some cases, preventing further deterioration or harm. Oral health is one of the top ten public health priorities of the Department of Health. However, DOH recognized the need to formulate and implement with effectiveness an Oral Health Policy to improve the oral health status of the population of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi with a focus on those most at risk. As part of DOH's ongoing effort to improve the healthcare services in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, DOH conducted a study to identify the policy priorities for Oral Health in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and identified that there is a need to redirect oral health services from a treatment model to a preventive one.

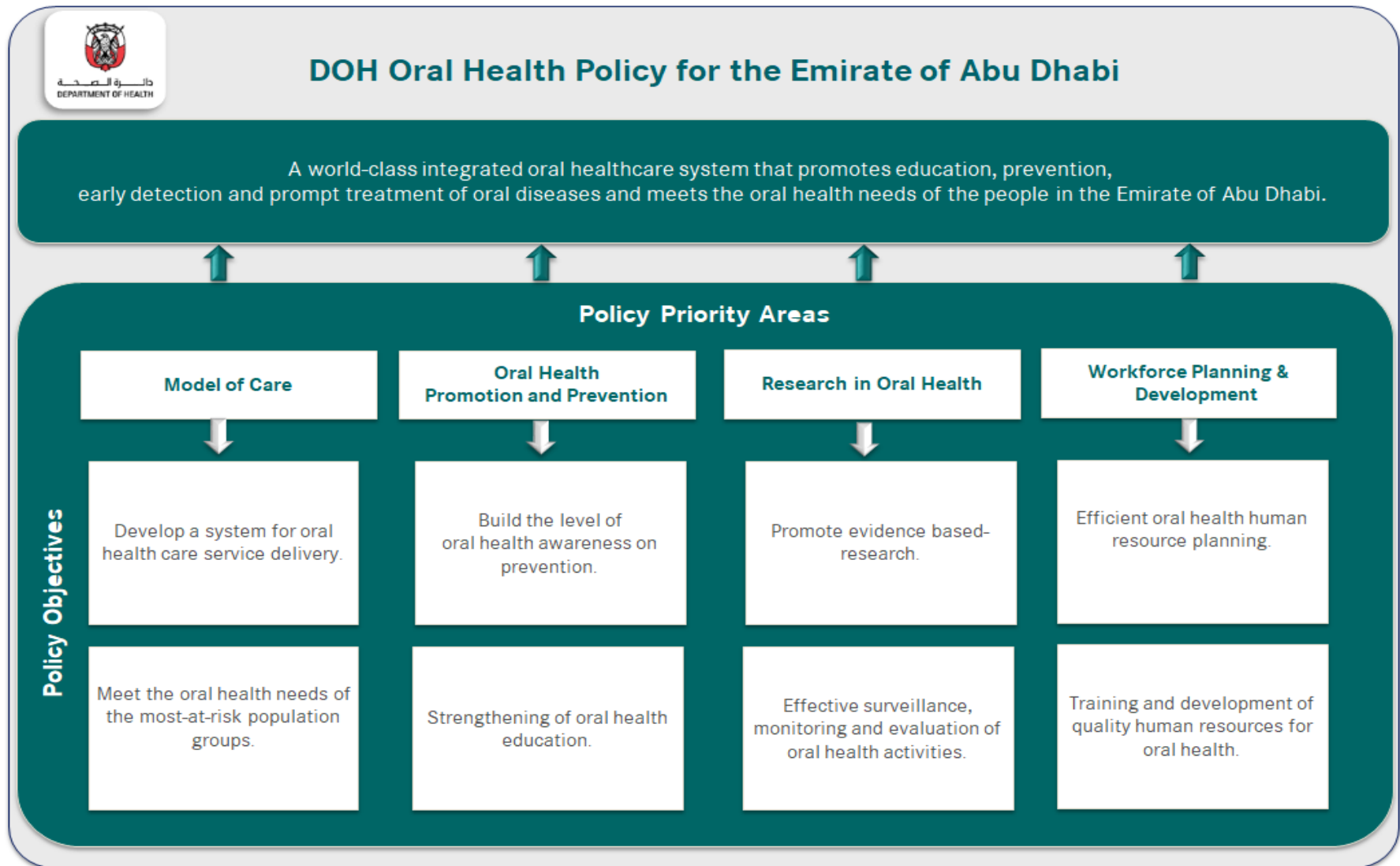
The policy therefore aims to develop and promote an accessible, effective & efficient and an integrated Oral Healthcare System based on awareness and education of the population on oral health hygiene, diseases and conditions, to practice prevention, early detection and prompt treatment of oral diseases, using evidence-based interventions with a focus on those most-at-risk in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The policy highlights the need to reach out to population groups who are at a higher risk of developing and/or dealing with the consequences of oral diseases and conditions. It encourages the healthcare sector to be evidence-based, forward looking and taking into accounts emerging global trends and local cultural and physical needs.

This Policy document is structured as follows:

- Section (3) provides the purpose of this overarching policy.
- Section (4) describes the stakeholders directly involved in and/or impacted by this policy.
- Section (5) sets out the vision and goal of this policy. It also highlights what are its key guiding principles.
- Section (6) identifies the policy objectives and strategies against the priority areas to improve oral healthcare, which lays the foundation for future policy work in the area of oral health.
- Section (7) describes the legal liability of the stakeholders.
- Section (8) provides the monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the policy.

¹ FDI World Dental Federation. The Challenge of Oral Disease – A call for global action. The Oral Health Atlas. 2nd ed. Geneva: FDI, 2015.

Figure 1: Overview of the Oral Health Policy for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi





2. Definitions

Term	Definition
Oral Health	<p>The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines Oral health as a state of being free from mouth and facial pain, Oral and throat cancer, Oral infection and sores, periodontal (gum) disease, tooth decay, tooth loss and other diseases and disorders.²</p> <p>According to the FDI World Dental Federation, Oral health is multi-faceted 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.³</p>
Most-at-risk population groups	Refers to the population groups who are at a higher risk of developing and/or dealing with the consequences of oral diseases and conditions, including but not limited to; children below 14 years of age, people of determination, patients suffering from mental health conditions, pregnant women, geriatric patients, patients in long-term care, rehabilitation and palliative care.
People of determination	“People of determination” is a term that refers to people with special needs.
Population	Refers to the national and non-national population of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
Dentist	A dentist is an appropriately qualified dental practitioner licensed by the Department of Health to practice all areas of dentistry.
Healthcare Professionals	A Healthcare Professional who holds a current and valid licence issued by DOH and authorising him or her to engage in certain professional activities.
Oral Health Professionals	A team of healthcare professionals provide oral healthcare, they include dentists, dental therapists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, dental laboratory technicians who work together to meet the many varied dental and oral health related needs of the patient. Outside of the dental profession, medical providers are also a critical component of the team of providers for oral health. Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) specialists, treat conditions of the head and neck including cancers of the mouth and throat. Physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants, also assume a great role in identifying oral disease.

²Petersen PE, World Health Organization. *The World Oral Health Report 2003: Continuous improvement of oral health in the 21st century - the approach of the WHO Global Oral Health Programme*. Geneva (Switzerland): WHO; 2003. Available: http://www.who.int/oral_health/media/en/orh_report03_en.pdf.

³ World Dental Federation. *FDI's definition of oral health*. Available: <http://fdiworldental.org/oral-health/vision-2020/fdis-definition-of-oral-health.aspx> [cited 2016 Nov 1].

3. Purpose of This Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 3.1 Articulate the Abu Dhabi Emirate's vision and goal for oral health by setting out DOH's sector-wide objectives and strategies for the healthcare services to achieve the vision.
- 3.2 Provide the health sector with a road map to encourage the health system to be more responsive to the oral health needs of the people.
- 3.3 Set out roles and responsibilities of the DOH, providers and insurers in the provision of timely and appropriate oral healthcare across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all the population, all DOH licensed healthcare facilities, dental professionals and insurers.

5. Vision, Goal and Guiding Principles

5.1 Vision

A world-class integrated oral healthcare system that promotes education, prevention, early detection and prompt treatment of oral diseases and meets the oral health needs of the people in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

5.2 Goal

To improve the oral health status of the population of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi with a focus on those most at risk of oral diseases and conditions.

5.3 Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles to this Policy are as follows:

- 5.3.1 **Accessibility:** Provision of quality oral healthcare, should be approachable, acceptable, available and accommodating, appropriate and affordable to every individual across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 5.3.2 **Community Participation:** Working with the whole community to identify preventive health issues and implement appropriate community focused interventions to promote oral health.



- 5.3.3 **Delivery of Care:** Evidence-based, preventive, curative and rehabilitative oral health care made available to all members of the community based on the oral health needs of the population.
- 5.3.4 **Integration:** In order to, effectively address the determinants of oral diseases, oral health promotion and services shall be integrated with those of other partners, sectors and programmes concerned with community health.
- 5.3.5 **Collaboration:** Multi-sectoral collaboration and partnership shall be strengthened between the public and private sectors to address the determinants of oral diseases and ensure the provision of good quality oral health services.
- 5.3.6 **“Most at risk” population considerations:** The policy supports that there should be promotion of interventions that take into account concerns of most-at-risk population groups, at all levels of care.
- 5.3.7 **Research:** The policy emphasizes the importance of identifying research priority areas in order to accelerate the building of science and evidence-based care to guide planning, implementation and evaluation in oral healthcare.
- 5.3.8 **Workforce Capacity Building:** The policy will promote continuing professional development at all levels of service providers and training of specialists in the various fields of oral health.
- 5.3.9 **Transparency through stakeholder engagement:** The commitment and active participation of all relevant stakeholders is required to advance and coordinate DOH’s effort to improve overall provision of effective and efficient oral healthcare.
- 5.3.10 **Accountability:** All healthcare facilities and their staff are accountable where non-compliance with the policy is identified.
- 5.3.11 **Evidence-based:** The elements of this policy shall be evidence-based, forward looking and taking into accounts emerging global trends and local cultural and physical needs.



6. Policy Priorities, Objectives and Strategies

6.1 Policy Priority 1: Service Model | Delivery of Oral Healthcare

Policy Statement:

- I. DOH seeks to ensure that Oral healthcare services are available and accessible to all across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- II. DOH seeks to ensure prompt treatment of Oral diseases, using evidence-based interventions with a focus on those most at risk in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Policy Objectives:

1. Develop and implement a system for Oral health care service delivery based on the defined acceptable standards of access, quality and patient safety.
2. Meet the Oral health needs of the most-at-risk population groups in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Objective 1: DOH seeks to develop and promote the implementation of a system for oral health care service delivery to ensure provision of oral health care services to all based on the defined acceptable standards of access, quality and patient safety.

Strategy 1: Strengthen the delivery of oral healthcare services to all based on the defined acceptable standards of access, quality and patient safety.

6.1.1 DOH Shall:

- 6.1.1.1 Ensure and improve access to dental services across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.1.1.2 Support the establishment of a Dental Council to assure quality of practice of oral health professionals.
- 6.1.1.3 Support the development of oral health service related sub-policies, standards, strategic plans and guidelines at all levels of care where and when necessary.
- 6.1.1.4 Support the integration of oral diseases and conditions into policies addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and general health.
- 6.1.1.5 Ensure the implementation monitoring and evaluation of the quality of care, improvement and patient satisfaction initiatives at all levels of oral health care.
- 6.1.1.6 Mandate interventions for effective and efficient care-coordination of dental services across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.1.1.7 Ensure that relevant facilities have mechanisms in place for the effective management and referral of patients with oral diseases and conditions within the same level of the healthcare system or across levels as needed.

6.1.2 DOH licensed healthcare facilities shall:

- 6.1.2.1 Cooperate with DOH in delivering quality assurance & improvement and patient satisfaction at all levels of oral health care.
- 6.1.2.2 Comply with the DOH's oral health service related policies, standards and guidelines where applicable.
- 6.1.2.3 Comply with the DOH requirements for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of care at all levels of oral health care provision.



- 6.1.2.4 Comply with the requirements for effective and efficient care-coordination of dental services across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.1.2.5 Have mechanisms in place for the effective management and referral of patients with oral diseases and conditions within the same level of the healthcare system or across levels as needed.

6.1.3 Healthcare insurers shall:

- 6.1.3.1 Put in place mechanisms to meet and support the implementation of oral health related DOH requirements where applicable.
- 6.1.3.2 As directed by DOH, apply a sustainable payment framework for Oral Healthcare.

Objective 2: DOH seeks to meet the oral health needs of the most-at-risk population groups in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Strategy 2: Strengthen the delivery of oral healthcare services to meet the oral health needs of the most-at-risk population groups in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

6.1.4 DOH Shall:

- 6.1.4.1 Recognize the barriers to oral health among the most-at-risk population groups, and ensure effective alliances with homes, schools, and other relevant bodies to reduce the financial and geographical barriers and unmet needs among these groups.
- 6.1.4.2 Encourage the development of oral health related capacity to meet the unmet needs of the most-at-risk population groups.
- 6.1.4.3 Commit to provision and expansion of most-at-risk population group specific oral healthcare services.

6.1.5 DOH licensed healthcare facilities shall:

- 6.1.5.1 Collaborate and comply with DOH to reduce the financial and geographical barriers and unmet needs among most-at-risk population groups.
- 6.1.5.2 Comply with the DOH requirements to provision of most-at-risk population group specific oral healthcare services.

6.1.6 Healthcare insurers shall:

- 6.1.6.1 Put in place mechanisms to meet and support the implementation of oral health related DOH requirements where applicable.
- 6.1.6.2 As directed by DOH, apply a sustainable payment framework for Oral Healthcare.

6.2 Policy Priority 2: Community Oral Health Promotion and Prevention

Policy Statement:

- I. DOH seeks to ensure evidence-based community centered oral health promotion and prevention of oral diseases and conditions across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- II. DOH seeks to implement an efficient oral health system with a focus on alignment of services towards prevention and health promotion rather than only treatment focused.



Policy Objectives:

1. Build up oral health awareness and its importance among the population of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the entire health workforce.
2. Strengthening of oral health education based on community participation and inter-sectoral collaboration.

Objective 1: DOH seeks to build up the level of oral health awareness and its importance across the population of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the entire health workforce.

Strategy 1: Initiate and strengthen oral health promotion interventions across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

6.2.1 DOH shall:

- 6.2.1.1 Develop early screening and detection interventions for prevention of dental caries, periodontal disease and oral cancer.
- 6.2.1.2 Promote prevention of oral diseases and conditions at the primary level of care for the population across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.2.1.3 Collaborate the prevention of oral diseases and conditions into national and emirate level community health programmes, with a focus on most-at-risk population groups.
- 6.2.1.4 Support Oral health promotion in schools across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.2.1.5 Support interventions with multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary partnerships across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi to raise awareness about oral health.
- 6.2.1.6 Implement, monitor and evaluate oral health promotion activities and programs to ensure continuous improvement.

6.2.2 DOH licensed healthcare facilities shall:

- 6.2.2.1 Collaborate with DOH and other related entities to support the development of oral health promotion activities.
- 6.2.2.2 Ensure that their actions to drive oral health promotion and prevention are in accordance with DOH specific initiatives and regulations.
- 6.2.2.3 Support oral health community specific programmes, with a focus on most-at-risk population groups.
- 6.2.2.4 Sensitize and train their oral health professionals to meet the oral health needs of the most-at-risk population groups.
- 6.2.2.5 Meet the DOH data reporting requirements for oral health promotion and prevention related initiatives.

6.2.3 Healthcare insurers shall:

- 6.2.3.1 Put in place mechanisms to meet and support the implementation of oral health related DOH requirements where applicable.

Objective 2: Ensure strengthening of Oral health education based on community participation and inter-sectoral collaboration.



Strategy 2: Initiate and strengthen Oral health education initiatives across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

6.2.4 DOH shall:

- 6.2.4.1 Study the oral health literacy levels of the population in Abu Dhabi.
- 6.2.4.2 Develop population centric oral health information, education and communication materials.
- 6.2.4.3 Collaborate with the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) and other concerned stakeholders to support integration of oral health education into the school curriculum across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.2.4.4 Support the dissemination of oral health education through electronic and social media platforms.
- 6.2.4.5 Integrate oral health education into emirate-level community health education, with a focus on most-at-risk population groups.
- 6.2.4.6 Support the oral health education and awareness for non-dental health professionals.

6.2.5 DOH licensed healthcare facilities shall:

- 6.2.5.1 Collaborate with DOH and other related entities to support the development of oral health education activities with a focus on populations most at risk.
- 6.2.5.2 Ensure that their actions to drive oral health education is in accordance with DOH specific regulations.
- 6.2.5.3 Sensitize and train their oral and other health professionals to meet the needs of the most-at-risk population groups.

6.2.6 Healthcare insurers shall:

- 6.2.6.1 Put in place mechanisms to meet and support the implementation of oral health related DOH requirements where applicable.
- 6.2.6.2 As directed by DOH, apply a sustainable payment framework for Oral Healthcare.

6.3 Policy Priority 3: Oral Health Research

Policy Statement:

DOH seeks to promote oral health research and ensure effective surveillance, monitoring and evaluation of oral health activities.

Policy Objective:

Strengthen the research activities on oral health in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Objective 1: DOH seeks to strengthen the research activities on oral health in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Strategy 1: Establishment of data collection and research procedures needed to support evidence-based oral health care.

6.3.1 DOH Shall:



- 6.3.1.1 Develop mechanisms to support and encourage continuing research into the causes and control of oral diseases and conditions.
- 6.3.1.2 Strengthen and support research on oral health epidemiology to study the oral health status of the population of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.3.1.3 Support the creation of an oral health registry for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.3.1.4 Put mechanisms in place to ensure enhancements in the reporting of dental health services quality and performance.
- 6.3.1.5 Strengthen the tools for monitoring and evaluation of oral health in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.3.1.6 Support oral health services research to identify new models of care and opportunities to increase effectiveness and efficiency within service delivery.
- 6.3.1.7 Develop program evaluation interventions to provide information on the efficiency and effectiveness of new and existing programs, including health promotion and prevention.

6.3.2 DOH licensed healthcare facilities shall:

- 6.3.2.1 Support the creation of an oral health registry for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.3.2.2 Comply with and support DOH mechanisms to ensure improvements in the reporting of dental health services quality and performance.
- 6.3.2.3 Comply with the DOH tools for monitoring and evaluation of oral health activities in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.3.2.4 Support DOH initiatives on oral health services research to identify new models of care and opportunities to increase effectiveness and efficiency within service delivery.
- 6.3.2.5 Support DOH research initiatives on oral health epidemiology to study the oral health status of the population of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.3.2.6 Comply with the DOH program evaluation interventions to provide information on the efficiency and effectiveness of new and existing programs, including health promotion and prevention.
- 6.3.2.7 Meet the DOH data reporting requirements for oral health education related initiatives.

6.3.3 Healthcare insurers shall:

- 6.3.3.1 Put in place mechanisms to meet and support the implementation of oral health related DOH requirements where applicable.
- 6.3.3.2 As directed by DOH, apply a sustainable payment framework for Oral Healthcare.

6.4 Policy Priority 4: Workforce Planning and Development

Policy Statement:

DOH seeks to ensure adequate human resources for oral health are available to meet the oral health needs of the population across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Policy Objective:

Ensure availability and development of adequate and quality human resources for oral health across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.



Objective 1: DOH seeks to ensure availability and development of adequate and quality human resources for oral health across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Strategy 1: Strengthen workforce planning and professional development of oral health professionals across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

6.4.1 DOH shall:

- 6.4.1.1 Encourage the provision of oral health training and education for healthcare professionals at the primary level of care.
- 6.4.1.2 Support the establishment of a Dental Council to advice on quality education and training for oral health.
- 6.4.1.3 Have mechanisms in place to integrate oral health into the training and professional development of all health professionals.
- 6.4.1.4 Collaborate and plan in partnership with other relevant entities to ensure efficient forecasting for oral health workforce, quality, and thereafter-ensuring equitable distribution across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.4.1.5 Collaborate with the relevant entities to periodically, review oral health training and continuing professional development programmes in light of projections for oral health to include necessary reforms relevant to the oral health needs of the population across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.4.1.6 Support the training of oral health professionals in skills necessary to address the needs of the most-at-risk population groups across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.4.1.7 Support the emphasis on oral health promotion and prevention in all oral health personnel training and development programmes.
- 6.4.1.8 Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of continuing professional development education and training for all oral health professionals.

6.4.2 DOH licensed healthcare facilities shall:

- 6.4.2.1 Comply with the DOH requirements to encourage provision of oral health training and education for healthcare professionals at the primary level of care.
- 6.4.2.2 Support the establishment of a Dental Council to advice on quality education and training for oral health.
- 6.4.2.3 Comply with the DOH mechanisms to integrate oral health into the training and professional development of all health professionals.
- 6.4.2.4 Comply with the DOH requirements on the training of oral health professionals in skills necessary to address the needs of the most-at-risk population groups across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- 6.4.2.5 Support the emphasis on oral health promotion and prevention in all oral health personnel training and development programmes.
- 6.4.2.6 Comply with the DOH mechanisms on the monitoring and evaluation of continuing professional development education and training for all oral health professionals.

6.4.3 Healthcare insurers shall:



- 6.4.3.1 Put in place mechanisms to meet and support the implementation of oral health related DOH requirements where applicable.
- 6.4.3.2 As directed by DOH, apply a sustainable payment framework for Oral Healthcare.

7. Enforcement and Compliance

7.1 DOH-licensed healthcare service providers and insurers must comply with the terms and requirements of this Policy. DOH may impose sanctions in relation to any breach of requirements under this Policy in accordance with the Complaints, Investigations, Regulatory Action and Sanctions Policy, Chapter XI, Healthcare Regulator Manual.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation framework involving healthcare providers, insurers and the regulator will be developed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Policy, and where necessary adopt changes to ensure continuous improvement within the health system.

8.1 Healthcare Providers and Insurers shall:

- 8.1.1 Put in place and agree on arrangements to monitor compliance with this policy.
- 8.1.2 Report all known or suspected medical incidents or deficiencies related to dental services abuse.
- 8.1.3 Report to DOH any issues that prevent eligible patients to access Oral health services.

8.2 DOH shall:

- 8.2.1 Monitor compliance of the Policy through patient complaints, audit and inspection and dental services utilization through e-claims (KEH).
- 8.2.2 Develop a detailed monitoring and evaluation framework.