

# Cultural Competency for Oral Health Professionals

Compliance starts with understanding, and understanding starts with cultural competence.

Have you ever had an experience where you did not know how to best serve a patient from a different background than your own? Have you ever been frustrated when trying to communicate with patients from diverse populations? As the U.S. population becomes more and more diverse, did you know that racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to have worse oral health outcomes?<sup>1</sup>

## Take the course.

The **Cultural Competency Program for Oral Health Professionals** course is offered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health to help improve access to care, quality of care, and oral health outcomes for your patients. This free, online program can be accessed at <https://oralhealth.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov>. You may earn up to six continuing education credits.

## Why is this important?

Failure to understand and manage social and cultural differences can have significant health consequences for minority groups in particular. The culture of different ethnic groups may influence:

- An individual's health, healing, and wellness belief systems.
- How a patient perceives illness and disease and their causes.
- The behaviors of patients who are seeking health care and their attitudes toward health care providers.

The provider who looks at the world through his or her own limited set of values or experiences can compromise the delivery of services to patients from other cultures.<sup>2</sup>

## Walking the Walk



Keystone First has been awarded the National Committee for Quality Assurance's (NCQA's) Multicultural Distinction Award for health plans that have developed and implemented culturally and linguistically appropriate care and monitored health care disparities among our managed care populations. The award highlights and recognizes health plans for their exemplary efforts and demonstrated effectiveness in promoting cultural competence and addressing the health care needs of diverse members.



Cultural Competency training is an integral component, long-term goal, and critical success factor of our Dental Check® program. Have

questions about Dental Check? Find more information on our website at <https://www.keystonefirstpa.com/provider/resources/dental/index.aspx> or contact your Dental Account Executive.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health (HHS OMH), 2013. National standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate services in health and health care: A blueprint for advancing and sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice. Retrieved from [www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov](http://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov).

<sup>2</sup> Betancourt JR, Green AR, Carrillo JE. Cultural Competence in Health Care. Emerging Frameworks and Practical Approaches. The Commonwealth Fund, October 2002.

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KF\_222059715-1

