

## Completing the Airway Team

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The following are providers you should seek out in your area to form a multi-disciplinary airway team:

**Myofunctional therapist-** Helps to resolve functional issues and compensatory patterns in orofacial musculature. Always best to have one for most cases with appliance therapy, sleep breathing disorders, and tethered oral tissues.

**Dentist-** Loaded position that may consist of several different doctors. A release provider with training and experience doing functional releases is critical to have for the diagnosis and treatment of tethered oral tissues. A sleep dentist with experience in oral appliance therapy is an excellent referral source and collaborative partner in the management of your patient's with diagnosed obstructive sleep apnea. A functional dentist who uses orthopedic and/or orthotropic dental appliances will be your collaborative partner in improving and providing the structural space your patient's need to achieve and maintain proper oral resting posture. Similarly an orthodontist who understands the detriments of extraction and retraction orthodontics is another key player in structural goals.

**Speech Language Pathologist-** Can also be your myofunctional therapist. They are best to have on the team for patients with speech and feeding disorders. Often these are concurrent with orofacial myofunctional disorders, but not mutually exclusive.

**Occupational or Physical Therapists-** Can also be your myofunctional therapists, however, RDHs and SLPs have specialized training in oral anatomy, health, and function, and are preferable. In cases where you have patients that struggle with sensory disorders and physical limitations it is best to have an OT or PT on the team to address those issues.

**Sleep physician-** This may be a pulmonologist or other physician with specialty in sleep medicine. As per the ADA recommendations any patients screened that have a high risk for sleep disordered breathing should be referred to a sleep physician.

**Body worker-** Physical manipulation of the fascial system and strains that may present within are under the scope and capabilities of a body worker. This all-encompassing title can refer to an osteopathic physician, chiropractor,

craniosacral therapist, or massage therapist.

Osteopathic physicians are trained to use gentle pressure and stretching to manipulate soft tissue to treat or prevent illness or injury. The later modalities are derived from traditional osteopathic medicine.

**Otolaryngologist or ENT**– Often the most difficult to add on a team, they are critical in providing medical clearance. Send patients with higher risk for diagnosis and treatment of upper respiratory blockages, disorders, and physiological anomalies.

**Lactation consultant**– Not exclusive to IBCLC, although that is the only board-certified credential. Pediatric offices and any office that will incorporate frenectomy procedures, need a knowledgeable lactation consultant. They will treat the breastfeeding dyad, or mother and baby, to facilitate proper latch and feeding.