

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Health Care Finance



Office of the Senior Deputy Director

DHCF Transmittal No.: 14-05

TO: District of Columbia Primary Care Providers Serving Children Under the Age of Three (3) Years in the DC Medicaid Program

FROM: Linda Elam, PhD, M.P.H. 
Senior Deputy Director and State Medicaid Director

DATE: **NOV 12 2013**

SUBJECT: Reimbursement to Trained Primary Care Providers for Fluoride Varnish Application for Patients Under Three Years of Age

The information in this transmittal applies to primary care providers serving children under three years of age in the DC Medicaid program.

All DC children eligible for the Medicaid program are entitled to receive the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) services benefit, a mandatory Medicaid benefit. EPSDT, also known as DC HealthCheck, is the pediatric component of the Medicaid program. EPSDT/ HealthCheck includes oral health services to be furnished by primary care providers as a part of a well-child visit and a full complement of dental services to be furnished by dentists. The dental services component of EPSDT requires comprehensive oral exams and dental cleanings every six months and any needed diagnostic or treatment services. This transmittal outlines the criteria for reimbursement for fluoride varnish applications by primary care providers for patients under the age of three as a part of a well-child visit.

Dental Care for District Children—Current Statistics and Guidelines

In 2012, 57% of the District of Columbia's children aged 3-20 years enrolled in DC Medicaid received some type of dental care from a dentist. However, only 21% of children under the age of three received some type of dental care from a dentist. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends that children visit a dentist at the time of the eruption of the first tooth, or no later than 12 months of age, and then every six (6) months thereafter.

The District is working with the pediatric provider community and advocacy groups in an effort to improve the oral health of the District's children—especially young children—by increasing access to preventive oral health services as early as possible. If you are a primary care provider who serves young children in the DC Medicaid program, we need your help to ensure District children get the oral health services they need.

New Oral Health Procedure Reimbursable for Young Children

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Early Childhood Caries (ECC) is the most prevalent communicable disease impacting our children. AAPD also recognizes ECC as a “significant public health problem.” Fortunately, ECC is preventable and treatable with early preventive measures and early detection and treatment. **In an effort to prevent and minimize the effects of ECC, the District is implementing reimbursement for trained primary care providers to provide fluoride varnish for patients under the age of three (3) years using Current Dental Terminology (CDT) code D1206 (Topical Application of Fluoride Varnish).**

Oral health assessments are a required part of every primary care well-child visit for young children so that primary care providers can assist in identifying children who need dental care. In addition to the regular oral health assessments, the application of fluoride varnish every three to six months has proven to decrease the incidence of ECC. Children at high risk for ECC are believed to benefit from quarterly applications of fluoride varnish, while those with low to moderate risk should receive the fluoride varnish applications once every six months. Beginning October 1, 2013, trained primary care providers may bill DC Medicaid for applications of fluoride varnish using CDT code D1206. D1206 is reimbursable up to once every three (3) months per patient at a rate of \$29/ per application for fee-for-service Medicaid patients under the age of three.

By December 1, 2013, the Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (AmeriHealth DC, Health Services for Children with Special Needs, MedStar Family Choice, and Trusted Health Plan) will also offer reimbursement to trained primary care providers for fluoride varnish applications.

Fluoride Varnish Training Required for Primary Care Provider Reimbursement

Only trained providers will be able to receive reimbursement for fluoride varnish applications furnished in a primary care setting. In-person and web-based fluoride varnish training is available using the Smiles for Life curriculum. **In-person training will be offered at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital on Friday, November 15, 2013 at 5:00 pm in the Gorman Auditorium. To register, please contact Yolette Gray at yagrav@childrensnational.org or (202) 471-4847.**

For information about additional in person trainings, or to complete the web-based training module, visit www.dchealthcheck.net. Information will be added as additional in-person training dates are set and the web-based training module is available for your convenience.

Note that primary care providers must also be in compliance on EPSDT/HealthCheck training requirements¹ in order to receive reimbursement for fluoride varnish applications. The EPSDT/HealthCheck training module can also be completed at www.dchealthcheck.net.

Coordination of Care Between Dentists and Primary Care Providers

An oral health assessment and fluoride varnish applications by a primary care provider should not replace a more comprehensive oral health assessment by a dentist within six months of the eruption of the first tooth, or by twelve months of age. All children should have an established Dental Home by three years of age. Refer patients to the DC Dental HelpLine at 1-866-758-6807 for assistance in identifying their primary dental provider (PDP)², locating a dentist, or making an appointment.

Contact

If you have any questions about the information contained in this transmittal, or need additional information, please contact Colleen Sonosky, Associate Director, Division of Children's Health Services (202-442-5913; colleen.sonosky@dc.gov) or Dr. Antonio Lacey, Program Analyst, Division of Clinician, Pharmacy, and Acute Services (202-442-5847; Antonio.lacey@dc.gov).

If you have questions about reimbursement for fluoride varnish services rendered to Medicaid beneficiaries enrolled in a Medicaid Managed Care Organization, please contact the appropriate individuals listed below.

AmeriHealth DC: Carl Chapman (cchapman@amerihealthdc.com or 202-617-2901)

Health Services for Children with Special Needs (HSCSN): Terri Hunt (thunt@hscsn.org or 202-495-7587)

MedStar Family Choice: Patricia Reid (patricia.e.reid@medstar.net or 202-243-5489)

Trusted Health Plans, Inc.: Kenny Greene (kgreene@trustedhpc.com) or 202-821-1103)

Thank you for your support and your assistance in furnishing pediatric oral health services to beneficiaries of the DC Medicaid program.

¹ All primary care providers who serve Medicaid beneficiaries under 21 years of age must complete EPSDT/HealthCheck training once every two (2) years. Training can be accessed at www.dchealthcheck.net and fulfills training requirements for all Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), as well as fee-for-service Medicaid. Completion of EPSDT/HealthCheck training provides five (5) continuing medical education (CME) credits, paid for by the Medicaid MCOs.

² All Medicaid beneficiaries enrolled in Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) should have the opportunity to select a primary dental provider (PDP). If a PDP is not selected at the time of enrollment, the MCO will assign one and notify the beneficiary. Beneficiaries have the option to change their PDP at any time by calling their MCO's Member Services Line.