

S. 20

Licensed Dental Practitioners



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Access to Dental Care



- In 2014, the HCA's consumer helpline opened over 100 cases related to problems accessing dental care:
 - Clients from 12 different counties
 - 62% were Medicaid beneficiaries
- In 2015 we have already opened dental access cases for clients in six counties.
- Vermont has a major shortage of dentists who accept Medicaid.
- Many of our clients cannot access dental care because no dentist will see them.
- There is no incentive for dentists to accept additional Medicaid patients.



Client Stories



- Ms. C's 13-year-old son had a cleaning scheduled at his usual dental office. When the family arrived for the appointment, the office refused to see the child because his insurance had switched from a private plan to Medicaid. Although the office does accept Medicaid, they were not accepting new Medicaid patients. The child would be considered new Medicaid patients because of the family's change in insurance coverage.



Client Stories



- Mr. D called the HCA after calling all 31 dentists in the Rutland area listed as accepting new Medicaid patients in the Medicaid provider portal. He was unable to find one dentist that would see him. Mr. D ended up having a painful tooth extracted during emergency hours at the community health center. He was still unable to find a regular dentist.



Client Stories



- Mr. A transitioned from commercial insurance to Medicaid. Mr. A's dentist then refused to treat him, even though the dentist is a Medicaid provider, because the dentist has a quota of Medicaid patients that has already been reached.
- Ms. B needed to see a dentist before she could have a surgical procedure done. She called a number of the offices listed as taking new Medicaid patients, and was unable to find a dentist that was in fact accepting new Medicaid patients.



Licensed Dental Practitioners



- Licensed dental practitioners (LDPs) would give Vermont's dental offices an economically viable option for treating additional patients who have Medicaid coverage:
 - Offices that choose to employ LDPs will be able to care for more patients and provide services in more settings.
 - LDPs will cost less to employ than dentists, but the services they provide will likely be reimbursed at the same rate as dentists.
 - Dentists will be able to use more of their time for complex procedures, which are generally reimbursed at higher rates.

Bottom line: Better patient access and improved profitability



CMS Guidance



- States have two options for reimbursing for services provided by dental professionals (such as dental hygienists, dental therapists and community dental health practitioners) who are supervised by dentists but are not themselves dentists:
 - States may pay claims filed by the affiliated dentist for services rendered by the dental professional; or
 - States may allow the dental professionals to enroll as Medicaid providers and directly bill Medicaid using their own Medicaid provider identification numbers.
 - Either way comports with federal requirements.

<http://www.medicaid.gov/Federal-Policy-Guidance/downloads/CIB-07-10-2014.pdf>



CMS Guidance



- For Medicaid purposes, dental supervision is a spectrum, ranging from direct supervision through indirect and general supervision, all the way to public health supervision and collaborative agreements.
- Services performed by new types of dental professionals such as dental therapists and community dental health practitioners are considered to be “dental services” if the dental professional has some sort of supervisory relationship or agreement or affiliation with a dentist.

<http://www.medicaid.gov/Federal-Policy-Guidance/downloads/CIB-07-10-2014.pdf>



CMS Guidance



- All “dental services,” regardless of whether they are performed by a dentist or by another type of dental professional, such as a dental hygienist or a dental therapist working under the supervision of a dentist (including those with an agreement or affiliation with a dentist), and regardless of whether the services are provided in a dental office or in a school or community setting, meet the dental requirement in the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit.

<http://www.medicaid.gov/Federal-Policy-Guidance/downloads/CIB-07-10-2014.pdf>

