



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
*Department of Medical Assistance Services*

KAREN KIMSEY  
DIRECTOR

804-786-7933  
www.dmas.virginia.gov

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr.  
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.  
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable S. Chris Jones  
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

Daniel S. Timberlake  
Director, Virginia Department of Planning and Budget

**FROM:** Karen Kimsey *KK*  
Director, Department of Medical Assistance Services

**SUBJECT:** 2019 Annual Report: Smiles for Children Improving Dental Care Across Virginia  
–FY2019

*Item 303 (J) of the 2019 Appropriation Act states the Department of Medical Assistance Services and the Virginia Department of Health shall work with representatives of the dental community: to expand the availability and delivery of dental services to pediatric Medicaid recipients; to streamline the administrative processes; and to remove impediments to the efficient delivery of dental services and reimbursement thereof. The Department of Medical Assistance Services shall report its efforts to expand dental services to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees and the Director, Department of Planning and Budget by December 15 each year.*

This report examines the progress that DMAS and its multiple partners have made towards this goal over the last thirteen years.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (804) 786-8099.

KK/

Enclosure

pc: The Honorable Daniel Carey, MD, Secretary of Health and Human Resources

# Annual: Smiles For Children Improving Dental Care Across Virginia- FY 2019

A Report to the Virginia General Assembly

December 15, 2019

## Report Mandate:

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## Background

Implemented on July 1, 2005, Smiles For Children is the Virginia Medicaid dental program that was designed to improve access to high quality dental services for children enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP-Virginia's CHIP is called FAMIS). The program was made possible through the support of the Governor and the General Assembly, including the establishment of an overall 30% increase in Medicaid funding for the reimbursement of dental services. The program celebrated its fourteenth anniversary in 2019, and offers benefits to over 1 million Virginians. Evidence continues to demonstrate that Virginia's Smiles For Children program is achieving its goals and continues to serve as a model dental program among Medicaid programs.

## **Smiles For Children SFY 2019 Highlights:**

In SFY 2019, DMAS worked closely with the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute (HPI) in conducting a mystery shopper initiative to ascertain wait times for **Smiles for Children** members in making an appointment with a dental provider. The survey results were overwhelmingly positive. The appointment rates between the **Smiles for Children** members (81.6%) and private coverage (85.2%) were very similar. The Virginia mystery shopper results are consistent with other high performing Medicaid states like Connecticut. There is still room for improvement. There are some areas, e.g. Southside Virginia, where there are fewer dental providers, and of those, few who participate in the **Smiles For Children** program.

**DMAS's mission is to improve the health and well-being of Virginians through access to high-quality health care coverage.**

DMAS administers Virginia's Medicaid and CHIP programs. Through the Medallion 4.0 and Commonwealth Coordinated Care (CCC) Plus managed care programs, more than 1 million Virginians access primary and specialty health services, inpatient care, behavioral health, and addiction and recovery treatment services. In addition, Medicaid long-term services and supports enable thousands of Virginians to remain in their homes or to access residential and nursing home care.

Medicaid members historically have included children, pregnant women, parents and caretakers, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. In 2019, Virginia expanded the Medicaid eligibility rules to make health care coverage available to close to 400,000 newly eligible, low-income adults.

Medicaid and CHIP (known in Virginia as Family Access to Medical Insurance Security, or FAMIS) are jointly funded by Virginia and the federal government under Title XIX and Title XXI of the Social Security Act. Virginia generally receives a dollar-for-dollar federal spending match in the Medicaid program. Medicaid expansion qualifies the Commonwealth for a federal funding match of no less than 90 percent for newly eligible adults, generating cost savings that benefit the overall state budget.

In an effort to reach children who had not had a dental visit in the past year, DentaQuest initiated a member calling campaign to **Smiles For Children** members. In November 2018, the robocall campaign reached out to over 100,000 members with no dental visit in the previous year. Members were located in areas of the Commonwealth with low dental utilization rates. Over 61,000 members were reached by this campaign and 28,400 of them visited the dentist after the call. This calling campaign resulted in a 45% success rate with 28,400 members obtaining dental care.

## Strategic Goals for SFY19

### **Goal #1: Increase/Maintain Provider Participation**

As of June 30, 2019, DMAS maintained the dental provider network with approximately 1,925 dental providers participating in the **Smiles For Children** network at 5,387 locations. Of Virginia's practicing dentistry workforce, 34% participate in the **Smiles For Children** program. More than 95% of **Smiles For Children** network providers are accepting new patients.

### **Goal #2 Increase/Maintain Pediatric Utilization**

In SFY2019, the pediatric dental utilization rate for children, ages 0-20 years of age, was 56%.

- When the **Smiles For Children** program started in 2005, the pediatric dental utilization rate was 24% for children ages 0-20 years.

More children (3,800+), ages 0-20 years, received dental care in SFY 2019 versus SFY 2018.

Children, ages 6-9 years of age, utilized services at the highest rate (70%) of all age groupings in SFY 2019.

### **Goal #3: Innovative Strategies to Improve Utilization through Member, Provider and Stakeholder Outreach**

In SFY2019, 79 trainings and outreach events were held to promote the **Smiles For Children** program, including:

- Ongoing trainings with MCO case management teams included an overview of **Smiles For Children** program, member benefits, how to find a provider, and information about other oral health resources throughout the state.
- Provision of oral health supplies and **Smiles For Children** educational materials to each MCO to distribute to their members, specifically, the

target populations of pregnant women and children in foster care.

- Direct member outreach at Missions of Mercy (MOMs) and community events, including vendor booths, distributing oral health supplies and literature, and referrals to a **Smiles For Children** dental provider.
- Direct engagement with over 100,000 individuals through robocalls, supply distribution, and community events.
- Extensive outreach to key State and local stakeholders to promote oral health and the **Smiles For Children** program, e.g. Virginia Health Catalyst, Virginia Dental Association, VA Head Start Health Advisory Committee, Department of Social Services, Virginia Department of Health on the fluoride varnish program as well as the Perinatal and Infant Oral Health Quality Improvement grant.
- DMAS/DentaQuest partnered with over 100 community partners across the Commonwealth.
- DentaQuest ensured the provision of oral health literacy tools for the medical provider community through the distribution of **Smiles For Children** referral Rx pads and brochures to medical providers at statewide conferences.
- Provider Outreach Wins/Victories
  - New relationship with Peninsula Dental Society, one of the components of Virginia Dental Association, with their members and attending annual meeting to provide **Smiles For Children** program updates and to encourage participation with the **Smiles For Children** program.
  - Cultivated a connection with the New Dentists Group of the Virginia Dental Association to establish relationships and program participation with new dentists in practice less than 10 years.
  - Expanded relationship with the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics by supporting and sponsoring the Dental Hero Award at the annual meeting. Provider Engagement staff conducted WebEx and telephonic training with providers/CEO/staff of state-wide free clinics to provide information on the **Smiles For Children** program and to encourage participation.

## Program Initiatives

DMAS accomplished three primary outreach initiatives in SFY2019: 1) increased application of fluoride varnishes to prevent tooth decay; 2) increased dental services for pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid; and 3) adding use of silver diamine fluoride to arrest dental cavities.

## Fluoride Varnish Applications

Fluoride varnish is an important measure in preventing cavities. It is applied to teeth to prevent cavities. State partnerships with Virginia dental providers, professional dental and medical organizations, and the contracted Medicaid managed care organizations, continue to increase the number of fluoride varnish applications for children under 3 years of age.

As a result of work with Virginia Department of Health's "Bright Smiles for Babies" fluoride varnish program, there was a 39% increase (from 13,736 children in SFY16 to 19,109 in SFY19) in the number of children receiving fluoride varnish treatments. The number of dental and medical providers trained in applying fluoride varnishes, the volume of claims, and claim dollar amounts continued to increase in SFY2019. The number of non-dental providers submitting claims has increased from 2016 to 2019 by 85% (see Table 1.)

**Table 1 – DMAS Medical Claims  
Fluoride Varnish Applications**

SFY	Number of Medical Providers Submitting Claims	#of Claims
2016	386	16,650
2017	504	22,916
2018	567	22,952
2019	714	25,646

## Dental Coverage for Pregnant Women Enrolled in Medicaid and FAMIS MOMS

As part of the *A Healthy Virginia* program, over 24,000 pregnant women have received a dental service.

- During SFY 2019, 7,100 + pregnant women enrolled in **Smiles For Children** visited a dentist.
- DentaQuest partnered with managed care organizations and provided oral health kits for distribution to approximately 3,000 pregnant women.

## Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF)

Untreated dental cavities are associated with discomfort and toothaches. Traditionally, dental cavities are treated with fillings. Silver diamine fluoride is an alternative treatment to arrest cavities.

The **Smiles for Children** program added coverage for silver diamine fluoride (SDF) to provide an alternative to arresting cavities in a non-invasive manner. In SFY19, 6,195 children received one or more applications of SDF. This represents a 186% increase from SFY2018, when 2,163 children received SDF treatments.

## Dental Advisory Committee (DAC)

The DAC is a professional advisory committee, which meets twice a year to provide input and guidance to the **Smiles For Children** program. The DAC meetings cover topics ranging from program updates from the dental benefits administrator, DentaQuest, to oral health initiatives and emerging developments in oral health and disease prevention. In SFY2019, Dr. Linda Vidone, DMD, Chief Clinical Officer and Vice President for Clinical Management at DentaQuest spoke to the DAC on the opioid epidemic. Dr. Vidone provided a national as well as a Virginia specific overview of the crisis and the role of dentists in prescribing opioids for pain. Ms. Cassie Yarborough of the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute (HPI) gave an update to the HPI/DMAS mystery shopper initiative conducted to ascertain wait times for **Smiles for Children** members to get an appointment with a dental provider. DAC conference calls were held twice a year, between the regular DAC meetings, with the focus in SFY2018 being updates to the Office Reference Manual and new Code on Dental Procedures and Nomenclature (CDT) codes added to the fee schedule.

## Compliance with the Dental Periodicity Schedule

In an effort to measure the effectiveness of the outreach program and compliance with the State and Federal periodicity schedule, the Periodicity Compliance report was prepared for DMAS by the dental benefits administrator. The report gauges **Smiles For Children** member compliance with EPSDT (Early, Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment) guidelines related to utilization of dental care.

The report continues to indicate an upward trend in utilization of dental sealants for **Smiles For Children** members ages 2-12. This cost effective, preventive dentistry tool will help children remain cavity free.

State Fiscal Year	Preschool 2 – 6 Years	School Aged 6 – 12 Years	Adolescence 12 – 18 Years
SFY 2019	25.6%	73.5%	11.4%
SFY 2018	23.1%	70.6%	13.3%
SFY 2017	19.7%	66.4%	16.2%
SFY 2016	16.8%	61.3%	18.6%
SFY 2015	13.9%	56.0%	21.4%

### **Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information (HEDIS)**

DMAS requires DentaQuest to provide an annual update on preventive dental visits. The Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information (HEDIS) 2019 data showed that 65.41% of the members, ages 2 – 20 years, had at least one dental visit, which was well above the HEDIS National Medicaid average of 55.79%. The ***Smiles For Children*** data showed the percentage of members with

at least one dental visit was above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the national HEDIS data (64.11%).

### **DentaQuest Program Integrity**

DentaQuest, the dental benefit administrator for the ***Smiles For Children*** program, conducted audits of 65 providers and 2,771 member records in SFY2019. As a result, DMAS recouped \$244,468.18 from 37 dental providers.

### **Summary**

Virginia’s ***Smiles For Children*** program is a nationally recognized oral health program which offers benefits to over 1 million Virginians. In the past state fiscal year, DMAS continued work to assure state-of-the-art services to Virginians through enhanced partnerships and access to quality dental care.