



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Medical Assistance Services

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November 9, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Janet D. Howell
Chair, Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Luke E. Torian
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Mark D. Sickles
Vice Chair, House Appropriations Committee

Daniel Timberlake
Director, Department of Planning and Budget

FROM: Karen Kimsey
Director, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

SUBJECT: Annual: Smiles For Children Improving Dental Care Across Virginia- FY 2020

This report is submitted in compliance with the Virginia Acts of the Assembly – Item 313.K., which states:

Item 313 (K) in the 2020 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 Department of Planning and Budget by December 15 each year.

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

KK/REC

Enclosure

Pc: The Honorable Daniel Carey, M.D., Secretary of Health and Human Resources

Annual: Smiles For Children Improving Dental Care Across Virginia- FY 2020

A Report to the Virginia General Assembly

December 15, 2020

Report Mandate:

Item 313 (K) in the 2020 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 Department of Planning and Budget by December 15 each year.

Background

Established in 2005, **Smiles For Children (SFC)** is the Virginia dental program designed to improve access to high quality dental services for children enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The program celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2020, 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.

Dental Advisory Committee (DAC)

As a component of the 2005 legislation that formed the SFC program, the DAC is a professional advisory committee, which meets four times a year to provide essential input and guidance to the **SFC** program. During SFY2020, the DAC continued to play a vital role in all aspects of the SFC program, particularly in DMAS's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in the planning for adult dental services.

Smiles For Children SFY 2020 Highlights

COVID Response

DMAS worked with the dental benefits administrator, DentaQuest, to develop virtual member outreach programs and ongoing provider communications related to dental treatments and best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, DMAS extended eligibility for pregnant women throughout the public health emergency to ensure this population had appropriate time to receive dental treatment.

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 for more than 1.6 million Virginians. Members have access to primary and specialty health services, inpatient care, behavioral health as well as 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 more than 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.

Teledentistry

DMAS recognized the importance of the utilization of teledentistry in helping providers and **Smiles For Children** members during the pandemic. With input from the DAC, DMAS added teledentistry benefits to the **Smiles For Children** program, with the priority being to ensure continued coverage and access to dental care.

Request For Proposal (RFP)

DMAS dental staff worked on several issues in the development of an RFP for a new dental benefits administrator:

- Facilitated two Requests for Information (RFI) sessions with potential vendors to gain ideas on state-of-the-art dental practices in Medicaid programs;
- Reviewed other state Medicaid dental programs and RFPs to examine services provided and fiscal structures;
- Completed transition of RFP content into the new VITA Requirements Traceability Matrix (RTM) which is standard for all IT related projects; and
- Developed an implementation plan and secured reviewers to serve on the proposal review team.

Strategic Goals for SFY20

Goal #1: Ensure Robust Provider Participation

As of June 30, 2020, there were approximately 1,927 dental providers participating in the **SFC** network at 5,487 locations compared to 1925 in SFY 2019. Of Virginia's practicing dentistry workforce, 34% participate in the **SFC** program. More than 95% of **SFC** network providers are accepting new patients.

Goal #2 Increase/Maintain Pediatric Utilization

In SFY 2020, the pediatric dental utilization rate for children, ages 0-20 years of age, was 50.4% compared to 56% in SFY 2019. Due to COVID-19, there were significant decreases in utilization with the closure of dental offices during March through June 2020. The data shows members are slowly returning to dental offices for treatment. Children, ages 6-9 years of age, utilized services at the highest rate (63.45%) of all age groupings in SFY 2020.

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

In SFY2020, 139 trainings and outreach events were held to promote the **Smiles For Children** program, and to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of these examples include, but are not limited to:

- Adopted virtual approaches to engage with members, providers, and community partners;
- Created an Early Education Oral Health Curriculum that was digitally distributed to SFC community partners and 156 directors in the Virginia Head Start Association;
- Partnered with the Virginia Health Catalyst to develop a **COVID-19 Healthy At Home** one-pager which was distributed, along with oral health kits, to over 900 families throughout Richmond and Southwest Virginia;
- Distributed oral health supplies and **SFC** educational materials to each managed care organization (MCO) to provide to their members, specifically, the target populations of pregnant women and children in foster care;
- Engaged over 100,000 members and providers through telephonic outreach, supply distribution, and community events;
- Provided extensive outreach to over 100 key State and local stakeholders to promote oral health and the **SFC** program;
- Expanded the working relationship with the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics and Bland Ministry Center by credentialing several providers into the SFC network;
- Continued the strong working relationships with the Virginia Department of Health, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, VCU Pediatric Dental Department, VCU School of Dentistry, VCU Health Systems, the Virginia Society of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons, American Cancer Association, CENEVIA, Old Dominion Dental Society, Virginia Dental Association, and the Virginia Dental Association Foundation.

Program Initiatives

Adult Dental

The 2020 General Assembly approved budget language to support the implementation of a Medicaid adult dental benefit. The language stipulated the adult benefit design be equivalent to the current dental benefit for pregnant women. DMAS staff began a robust planning process to

address the budget language requirements, with coverage to begin July 1, 2020.

In April 2020, funding for the adult dental initiative was unallocated due to COVID-19. However, even with the interruption from the pandemic, the DMAS team completed the following work in planning for the adult dental benefit implementation:

- DMAS staff researched other state Medicaid adult dental benefits to gather information on coverage and benefit designs;
- The DAC met on May 15, 2020, to provide guidance to DMAS staff in the benefit design and implementation. They also met twice via conference calls. Four new organizational representatives joined the DAC to assist in implementing the adult dental services, e.g. the Virginia Dental Hygiene Association, the Virginia Health Care Association, the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics, and a representative for the intellectually and mentally disabled (ID/IM) populations.

Additionally, two DAC workgroups were formed to address specific needs for the benefit implementation: 1) provider engagement and program design, and 2) communication/marketing to public and provider communities;

- The dental benefits administrator (DBA) examined the current provider network to ensure an adequate number of credentialed providers to serve the new adult members;
- DMAS consulted with Marko Vujcic, PhD, Chief Economist and Vice President, Health Policy Institute at the American Dental Association, regarding the budget estimate for the new services and the network adequacy for the adult dental coverage;
- DMAS collaborated with the Virginia Health Catalyst and the Virginia Dental Association on marketing and communications, as well as outreach and program design; and,
- The provision of adult dental services was included in the new dental benefits administrator RFP to ensure the coverage for adults.

Ongoing Initiatives

Fluoride Varnish Applications

Fluoride varnish is an important measure in preventing 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 42% increase (from 13,736 children in SFY16 to 19,593 in SFY20) 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 SFY2020. The number of non-dental providers submitting claims has increased from 2016 to 2020 by 90% (see Table 1.)

Table 1 – DMAS Medical Claims Fluoride Varnish Applications

SFY	Number of Medical Providers Submitting Claims	#of Claims
2020	732	26,309
2019	714	25,646
2018	567	22,952
2017	504	22,916
2016	386	16,650

Dental Coverage for Pregnant Women Enrolled in Medicaid and FAMIS MOMS

As part of the A Healthy Virginia program, over 30,000 pregnant women have received a dental service. During SFY 2020, 5,700 + pregnant women enrolled in SFC visited a dentist. In addition, DentaQuest partnered with managed care organizations and provided oral health kits for distribution to approximately 3,600 pregnant women.

Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF)

Untreated dental cavities are associated with discomfort and toothaches. Traditionally, dentists treat cavities with fillings. Silver diamine fluoride is an alternative treatment to arrest cavities in a non-invasive manner.

In SFY 2020, 7,014 children received one or more applications of SDF. This represents a 13% increase from SFY 2019.

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 gauges **SFC** 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 **SFC** members ages 2-12. This cost effective, preventive dentistry tool will help children remain cavity free.

Table 2: Utilization of Dental Sealants, Ages 2-12 Years

State Fiscal Year	Preschool 2 – 6 Years	School Aged 6 – 12 Years	Adolescence 12 – 18 Years
SFY 2020	28.0%	74.6%	9.3%
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) 2020 data showed that 63.73% of the members, ages 2 – 20 years, had at least one dental visit, which is well above the HEDIS National Medicaid average of 55.46%. The **SFC** data showed the percentage of members with at least one dental visit was above the 50th percentile of the national HEDIS data (60.15%).

DentaQuest Program Integrity

DentaQuest, the dental benefit administrator for the **SFC** program, conducted audits of 76 providers and 2815 member records in SFY 2020. As a result, DMAS recouped \$371,618.41 from 44 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 its work to assure state-of-the-art services to Virginians through enhanced partnerships and access to quality dental care.