



SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DENTAL MEDICAID

August 31, 2020

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Hanlon, Patricia (S), Chair
Cooperman, Kenneth (NY)
Backer, Steven (2)
Sandu, Diana (4)
Wilson, Michael (6)

Kapral, Elizabeth (8)
Rozdolski, Raquel (9)
Kanner, David (N)
Mota Martinez, Mercedes (Q)
Jacobso, Amarilis (B)

The Special Committee on Dental Medicaid met on August 31, 2020 via Zoom. All members attended including Ms. Betsy Bray, Director, and Ms. Jacquie Donnelly, Manager, NYSDA Health Affairs. Dr. Michele Griguts, Dental Director, Division of Medicaid and Dental Directors, NYS DOH attended as a guest of the Committee.

Dr. Hanlon called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Following a motion by Dr. Hanlon, the Committee adopted the minutes from its previous meeting held on April 13, 2020, by unanimous consent. She then began the meeting by asking the members to introduce themselves.

Dr. Hanlon asked Dr. Cooperman if he had any concerns he would like to bring to the Committee's attention. Dr. Cooperman had previously stated that he would only be able to attend a portion of the meeting. He said he has noticed that many dental offices in his community – the Bronx and northern Manhattan, have remained closed. He wondered whether many dentists, due to the coronavirus, chose to retire or simply could not afford to keep their practice open.

Chairperson's Report

Dr. Hanlon reported that effective August 1, for fee-for-service providers and October 1, for Medicaid Managed Care (MMC) plans, the Medicaid program will begin coverage of silver diamine fluoride (SDF). She briefly reviewed the criteria for the use and reimbursement of SDF.

Teledentistry

Ms. Bray informed the Committee that she has been invited to be a part of the Department of Health's Medicaid Redesign Team II Teledentistry Workgroup. The group is discussing how to continue to utilize teledentistry beyond the pandemic with access to care in mind. The

Workgroup reviews programs, such as Columbia Dental Clinic, that are currently building tele-dental screening and triage into their workflow and plan to sustain it.

Ms. Bray then provided an update on the Dental Demonstration Project and the integration of a Community Dental Health Coordinator this year. The project will integrate teledentistry and a cell phone app to aid in communication with patients.

NYS DOH Medicaid Update

Dr. Griguts reported that the inclusion of coverage for SDF was a result of a Medicaid Redesign Team II initiative. She stated that DOH is currently promoting the use of fluoride varnish by practitioners other than dentists. Currently, it is reimbursable to physicians and nurse practitioners. Effective August 1, fluoride varnish became reimbursable to other provider types, including registered nurses. Dr. Griguts would like to see the Department expand the age limitation for the topical application of fluoride varnish from age 6 to age 20. She feels that fluoride varnish is a better product than using fluoride gel or foam as it is not aerosol generating.

Dr. Griguts reported that effective August 1, for Medicaid fee-for-service and November 1, for Medicaid Managed Care, the Medicaid program is expanding counseling sessions for smoking cessation. The current guidelines limiting sessions to 8 per year will be eliminated to allow for as many sessions as deemed medically necessary.

Dr. Griguts discussed plans to monitor trending demographics of Medicaid and MMC users to determine access. Dental dashboards are currently being developed and will be shared with NYSDA once they are released. She also reported that there has been no progress in providing coverage for nitrous oxide as it is considered as being included in the cost of service. Dr. Rozdolski stated that she feels that a cost savings can be shown if compared to patients receiving general anesthesia in a hospital setting. She offered to share data with Dr. Griguts.

Member Issues

Ms. Bray updated the Committee on NYSDA's advocacy efforts regarding PPE. Dr. Hanlon pointed out that the increased cost of PPE, wait times between dental procedures in addition to reduced patient volume has affected many practices. Dr. Cooperman commented that his patient volume has been reduced by 60%. Ms. Bray suggested that NYSDA could potentially conduct a survey to determine how the pandemic has affected dental practices, especially those who are Medicaid providers. Ms. Bray will discuss this further with NYSDA leadership and communications staff.

Dr. Backer discussed downcoding issues he has been experiencing with DentaQuest. Drs. Wilson and Jacobo stated they are having the same problems. Dr. Backer suspects that DentaQuest may be in violation of the contract they entered into with the State although he has not been able to obtain a copy. Dr. Griguts offered to see what information she could find.

Dr. Backer also discussed administrative problems he has encountered when trying to refer a patient insured by Liberty Dental to an oral surgeon. He stated that as a result, many oral

surgeons are dropping out of Liberty's network. Dr. Jacobo has been experiencing similar problems including long hold times when trying to contact them. Ms. Bray will attempt to reach out to Liberty Dental to discuss these issues. Dr. Jacobo was asked by Liberty to participate in a pilot project for teledentistry, which she declined.

Ms. Bray asked Dr. Griguts for an update on recommendations for changes to Medicaid policy that Dr. Backer suggested during the Committee's April meeting. Dr. Backer's suggestions are listed below:

1. Prior approvals that have already been issued and due to expire anytime in 2020 should be automatically extended to December 31, 2020. This will allow providers time to finish and insert cases already in progress. Currently, there is no process to request an extension.
2. Relax rules for claim submissions and notifications.
3. Keep EOBs on the eMedNY website for a longer period, possibly 90 days.

Dr. Griguts responded that items #1 and #2 would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis rather than making adjustments to these policies across the board. She stated that item #3 was not possible to implement with the current system the Department of Health is using.

There being no additional business before the Committee, Dr. Hanlon adjourned the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia M. Hanlon, DMD
Chair