

COVID Dental Subcommittee

June 8, 2021

Participants: Christina McCutchan, HFS
Ryan Dickerson, HFS
Shelly Defrates, HFS
Dr. Jason Grinter
Dr. Mona VanKanegan
Dr. David Trost
Mary Pat Burgess
Dr. Luciana Sweis
Dawn Fehr
Dr. William Simon
Dr. Henry Lotsof
Dr. Kathy Shafer

New COVID Regulations

Dr. Mona VanKanegan stated that CDC guidelines for COVID have not changed so will continue following until they do change.

Changes to Healthcare Protocols

Dr. Luciana Sweis shared a couple of article recently published in the Journal of the American Dental Association showing that COVID-19 incidence was lower among dentists than other health care workers ([https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177\(21\)00204-X/fulltext](https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177(21)00204-X/fulltext)). A separate study conducted at the Ohio State University published in the Journal of Dental Research found that aerosol generating dental procedures pose a low risk for transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00220345211015948>) .

Mary Pat Burgess stated that it is going to take more to convince individuals outside the dental community to accept this, especially in the school setting. The message coming from dental community will not come across as well as it would from the CDC. Chicago Public Schools (CPS) will not accept until CDC agrees and backs up. Dr. William Simon agreed with Mary Pat Burgess stating that the findings are premature and need non-dental publications of such information. Dr. Trost indicated that his experience with the school serviced in the past several months has been quite encouraging. School staff, parents and students expressed their appreciation for the much needed services, especially during this health crisis.

All Kids Dental School Program

Dr. David Trost and Dr. Jason Grinter both stated that they had zero issues in April and May in the schools. Schools have recognized the value of the program and were much more supportive than previously.

Dental Code Benefit Limitations

Mrs. McCutchan stated that the recommended CDT dental code parallel billing benefit changes were approved for children effective May 1, 2021 until the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Committee discussed the possibility of starting the process of making this change permanent in rule and possible legislation. Mrs. McCutchan stated she will add to the next Dental Policy Review Committee agenda for further discussion.

Case Management

Ms. Mary Pat Burgess asked others for their experiences with MCOs, especially during COVID regarding case management, especially in finding dental offices to accept children after being seen in the school program. Dr. Henry Lotsof stated that MCOs do case management as they have relationships with established providers. Ms. Mary Pat Burgess stated that dental providers do not know what type of eligibility the children that they see in the schools have therefore do not know which providers are enrolled in which MCO to refer the child to. Dr. Williams Simon stated that Blue Cross Blue Shield is rolling out a dental home project that may be helpful in this instance. Ms. Christina McCutchan stated that on the FFS side, the dental providers are required to have a referral dental provider for restorative care needs. However, with most children now in managed care plans, this does create an issue. Obviously, member's parent or guardian should call the MCO for referral but asked that we add to the agenda of the next Dental Policy Review Committee in July.

Cost of Care

Dr. William Simon stressed concerns of the increased cost of providing dental care and low reimbursement rates, especially during COVID with additional PPE, reduced capacity, longer appointment times, etc. Dr. David Trost agreed with Dr. Simon.

Bicuspid Sealants

Dr. David Trost asked if Medicaid would be willing to cover Bicuspid Sealants to reduce caries rates if applied. Dr. Jason Grinter stated that he believes bicuspid sealants are a covered service in New Jersey and that covering pre-molar teeth is not unheard of. Dr. David Trost committed to doing further research on this.

Masks

Dr. David Trost asked whether we have any say if children in a school setting need to wear masks. Further stating that masks are dirty, wet, are hardly washed, etc. Would like to see mask mandated lifted for kids. Dr. Mona VanKanegan stated that she does not know when this mandate will be lifted and that we adhere to CDC, ISBE and IDPH guidelines.

Legislation

Dr. Bill Simon stated that the bill to increase Dental Budget by \$10M effective 01/01/22 has passed houses and is awaiting Governor's signature.

COVID Vaccine

Dr. Luciana Sweis asked about the 4 hour in-person training allowing dental providers to administer the COVID vaccine. Dr. Williams Simon stated that anyone interested should check with Mr. Dave Marsh and Mr. Eric Larson at ISDS.

Next meeting is scheduled for 08/03/21.