

Annual Dental Visits for Members with Developmental Disabilities (ADD)

2021 PAPM Oral Health Performance Measures

What is Developmental Disability?

A severe, long-term or often lifelong disability that can affect cognitive ability, physical functioning, or both. Developmental disabilities can involve intellectual disability as well as physical disability.

Some common physical disabilities include:

- Blindness from birth
- Cerebral palsy
- Spinal cord injury
- Amputation
- Multiple sclerosis
- Spina bifida
- Musculoskeletal injuries (ex- back injury)
- Arthritis
- Muscular dystrophy

Some disabilities that are both physical and intellectual stemming from genetic or other causes include:

- Down syndrome
- Fetal alcohol syndrome

A common intellectual disability that affects primarily males is:

- Fragile X Syndrome (these patients may also show signs of ADD or autism spectrum disorder)

Importance of Oral Health Care for Patients with Developmental Disability

Some common oral health problems patients with disabilities face include:

- Cavities
- Periodontal disease
- Malocclusion
- Damaging oral habits
- Oral malformations
- Delayed tooth eruption
- Trauma and injury
 - Falls or accidents are common in patients with cerebral palsy or seizure disorders

Diet, poor hygiene habits, prolonged bottle feeding, and medications are common causes of cavities and periodontal disease in this population.

Good oral healthcare habits are important for any patient, especially for patients with a developmental disability. Teaching good oral health care habits and offering treatment services might require adaptation of services you provide every day in your office.

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Having access to routine oral healthcare that includes services such as a dental cleaning can ensure a healthy mouth for your patients and our members. Oral healthcare helps patients to avoid cavities, gum disease, and wearing of enamel. Aetna Better Health measures oral health care for patients with developmental disabilities through the PAPM Oral Health Performance Measure – Annual Dental Visits for Members with Developmental Disabilities (ADD).

We encourage providers to not view a developmental disability as a barrier to oral healthcare.

If you have a patient with special needs, we can assist you in finding a dentist who specializes in care for these children. Contact SkyGen Customer Service at 800-508-4892 for assistance in locating a dental provider in your area that can assist the member in meeting their oral health needs.

PAPM Measure Description

This measure assesses the percentage of Medicaid enrollees with a developmental disability age 2 through 20, that had at least one dental visit during the measurement year.

*Please note: the CMS Performance Measure *Annual Dental Visits for Members with Development Disabilities (ADD)* is not to be confused with the HEDIS measure *Follow-Up Care for Children Prescribed ADHD Medication (ADD)*.

Eligible Population

2 through 20 years of age as of December 31st of the measurement year.

*Visits for many one-year-olds will be counted because the specification includes children whose second birthday occurs any time during the measurement year.

Capturing Care

Any claim with a dental practitioner during the measurement year meets criteria. A dental practitioner is defined as follows:

- A practitioner who is a Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS), a Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD)
- Certified and licensed dental hygienists are considered dental practitioners

*Please refer to the oral health coding guide for a listing of codes that will satisfy the ADD Oral Health Performance Measure.



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Some Strategies for a Successful Appointment and Improving Oral Health Outcomes for Members with Developmental Disabilities

- Determine each patient's mental capabilities and communication skills
 - Involve caregivers in treatment plans
 - Educate in language that patients can understand
 - Repeat instructions as needed
 - Involve your patients in hands-on demonstration on good oral habits such as brushing or flossing
- For patients with anxiety related to visiting the dentist try some of these things:
 - Keep the appointments short and offer the treatment the patient can tolerate at that time
 - Allow items that the patient gains comfort from in to the visit such as a stuffed animal or a blanket
 - Involve the caregiver by having them sit near the patient and hold the patient's hand
 - Offer praise to the patient and reinforce good behavior
- Ensure physical comfort during the dental visit
 - For wheelchair bound patients ask the caregiver about preferences the patient may have such as pillows or padding when being transferred to the exam chair
- Recommend noninvasive preventive measures for cavities such as sealants or fluoride
 - Advocate for water fluoridation in your community
- Encourage plenty of water intake
 - Helps with increasing saliva in the mouth and reducing sugar left from medications on teeth and gums
 - Aids in rinsing out food leftover from meals (food pouching)
- Work with patients and caregivers to augment oral health care tools such as a toothbrush or floss
 - Adapt the toothbrush so it is easier to hold for patients or discuss using an electric toothbrush
 - Encourage the use of floss holders
- For patients unable to brush or floss independently involve caregivers in oral hygiene
 - Consistency is important – might be helpful to practice oral health at the same time each day, location, and position based on that patient's needs
 - Wipe the patient's oral cavity with a clean wash cloth after meals
- If transportation is an issue for keeping appointments refer patients and caregivers to Medical Assistance Transportation (MATP) - for Medicaid enrollees only
 - Member can call in to Aetna Better Health of Pennsylvania Member Services for assistance: **1-866-638-1232**