

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
DIVISION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

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Dear Dentist,

Expanded Medicaid coverage for adults begins April 1 following legislation passed last year and recent approval from the federal Medicaid agency. Each adult Medicaid recipient now has a \$1,150 allowance per state fiscal year for preventive and restorative care.

While the larger issue of increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates remains, the Department of Health and Social Services hopes this enhanced coverage and other steps will make serving adult Medicaid patients easier:

- The state expects that, over time, the emphasis on prevention will reduce the need for emergency treatment.
- If you see the need for preventive or restorative care when a patient comes in for emergency treatment, you can do both at the same time once the newly covered care has been authorized.
- The state recently clarified that if you practice charges for missed appointments, you may also bill Medicaid patients.

Hopefully, the new coverage will mean fewer extracted teeth and fewer trips to hospital emergency rooms, as well as a better-looking mouth.

Covered services include cleanings, exams, crowns, root canals and dentures. ***Emergent dental services do not count against the annual cap.*** With only a few exceptions, services that have been covered as emergent still are.

To see a full list of the CDT codes in the enhanced coverage category, including the ten CDT codes for services that used to be coded emergent that will now apply to the cap (for example, a two-surface amalgam restoration,) go to First Health's Web site, <http://alaska.fhsc.org>, click on the Providers tab, then go to Provider Updates at the bottom of the page.

**You can call First Health's Provider Inquiry line at 1-800-770-5650 if you have any questions.**

For a PDF of the regulations, 7 AAC 43.625, see

<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/publicnotice/PDF/192.pdf>.

Key features of the enhanced dental services are:

- Once a patient's annual \$1,150 limit is spent, they are responsible for additional costs (***This does not affect services covered as emergent.***) The first annual cap runs through June 30.
- While dentures are covered under the cap, we understand the cap typically won't cover a full set within a state fiscal year. You and your patient may need to schedule the work in two parts before and after June 30 (the end of the current fiscal year).

- The state requires prior authorization for the enhanced services so when dentists call or fax, First Health can verify whether their patient has seen another provider for services that applied against their cap.
- Please, bill promptly. If a patient has exhausted their cap but the dentist has not billed for the services, the claims will not show on First Health's Electronic Verification System. First Health prior authorization phone numbers are: 1-800-994-7934, 1-907-644-5997 or fax 1-907-644-9861.
- Also, please help patients prioritize their care needs. You must explain that if their annual amount only covers part of a new service, they will have to pay the balance of the Medicaid reimbursement rate. If they have no cap left, they will have to pay your full charge (at the Medicaid reimbursement rate) for non-emergency services.

As an example, here are sample costs for a patient who needs three full crowns:

Service	Medicaid Reimbursement	Medicaid Patient Responsibility
1 <sup>st</sup> crown	- 0 -	- 0 -
2 <sup>nd</sup> crown	\$210 <i>(the cap is not exhausted)</i>	\$210 <i>...so the patient pays the balance of the Medicaid reimbursement rate)</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> crown	- 0 -	The provider's rate*** <i>(*with no Medicaid allowance, the Medicaid reimbursement rate does not apply)</i>

The department recognizes that tribal dental programs won't ask their beneficiaries for missed appointments or expenses above the annual cap, and that Federally Qualified Health Centers may have to respect federal billing policies.

If you have questions, please contact the First Health prior authorization line, 1-800-994-7934.

Thank you very much for your participation in Alaska's Medicaid Program.

Sincerely,

Dental Health Program Staff  
Alaska Department of Health & Social Services