

## Health Practice Tip May 2014

### Dental Care for Adults and Enteral Nutrition Products Come Back to Medi-Cal!

May 1st marks the long-anticipated return of adult dental care and enteral nutrition products as Medi-Cal covered benefits. In the last five years, these benefits had been slashed from the program as part of dramatic cuts to the state budget. In 2009, the state terminated most dental services for adult Medi-Cal beneficiaries, with the exception of pregnant women and persons in long-term care.<sup>1</sup> And in 2011, the state restricted Medi-Cal coverage of enteral nutrition services, otherwise known as liquid nutritional supplements, to feeding tube products.<sup>2</sup>

But last June Governor Brown signed AB 82, restoring these vital health care services as Medi-Cal covered benefits. Below are brief descriptions regarding these benefits, with links to state guidance for additional information regarding coverage.

#### Dental Care for Adults

As of May 1st, adults over the age of 21 in Medi-Cal will be able to access the dental program, known as Denti-Cal, to receive preventive and diagnostic services, as well as restorative services.<sup>3</sup> Covered dental services include:

- Examinations, radiographs or photographic images, prophylaxis, and fluoride treatments;
- Amalgam and composite restorations;
- Prefabricated stainless steel, resin, and resin window crowns;
- Anterior root canal therapy;
- Complete dentures, including immediate dentures;
- Complete denture adjustments, repairs, and relines.

A list of the services that have been reinstated and their procedure codes can be found in the August 2013 Denti-Cal Bulletin, vol. 19, number 14, located [here](#). Full descriptions of dental services, the requirements for coverage, and utilization limits are in the Denti-Cal Provider Handbook at Section 5, "Manual of Criteria and Schedule of Maximum Allowances," located [here](#).

Beneficiaries can find a Denti-Cal dentist by calling 1-800-322-6384 Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm or online at [http://www.denti-cal.ca.gov/WSI/Bene.jsp?fname=prov\\_ref\\_sacramento](http://www.denti-cal.ca.gov/WSI/Bene.jsp?fname=prov_ref_sacramento).

### **Enteral Nutrition Products**

AB 82 also restores as of May 1st the enteral nutrition benefit,<sup>4</sup> which was severely limited in the 2011 budget. The reinstatement of this benefit allows adult Medi-Cal beneficiaries who cannot chew or swallow easily to purchase liquid nutritional supplements as a covered benefit. Such products may be covered when prescribed by a licensed provider to prevent serious disability or death in patients with medically diagnosed conditions that preclude the use of regular food. For more information, see the "Enteral Nutrition Products: An Overview" in the Medi-Cal Pharmacy Provider Manual located [here](#).

The Department of Health Care Services also issued guidance to Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans on the provision of enteral nutrition products in Policy Letter 14-003, dated April 11, 2014, available [here](#), "strongly encourag(ing plans) to work collaboratively with local, county and community agencies ... to evaluate and meet the needs of high-risk beneficiaries" for this benefit.

*If you have questions regarding these services or if you are working with a Medi-Cal enrollee who is having difficulty accessing these services, please contact Shirley Sanematsu at [ssanematsu@wclp.org](mailto:ssanematsu@wclp.org) for assistance.*

1 Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 14131.10(b)(1)(a). Since July 2009, the dental work that was generally available to non-pregnant adult Medi-Cal beneficiaries and those not living in long term care was limited to medical and surgical services required by federal law, known as FRADS (Federally Required Adult Dental Services), emergencies, and dental services precedent to a covered medical service.

2 See Medi-Cal Pharmacy Update, October 2011, Bulletin 761 at <http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/bulletins/artfull/ph201110.asp>

3 Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 14131.10(b)(2)(C)

4 Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 14132.86.