



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

Practice Number: 02001
Submitted By: Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, Division of Public Health
Submission Date: February 2002
Last Updated: January 2005

Medicaid Travel of Pediatric Dental Teams

Residents in many communities in southeast Alaska, and elsewhere in the state, receive dental services through itinerant dental visits (e.g., providers fly/boat/snowmobile to remote locations with portable dental equipment) and/or they travel to regional hub communities for dental care. Like many states, access to dental services for children enrolled in Medicaid, especially new Medicaid clients, is a long-standing problem. The Alaska Medicaid State Plan stipulates that provider travel expenses and per diem may be paid when State Public Health Nurses request this as a means to provide access to services. This was found to be necessary as a result of their EPSDT screening services. In FY2001, the Division of Public Health initiated a grant with the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC), a non-profit Native health corporation, to assist with travel and per diem costs for pediatric dental teams traveling in southeast Alaska to deliver services. The teams provide dental examinations and treatment for children enrolled in the Denali KidCare/Medicaid program (Medicaid and S-CHIP). During the first year of the grant (November 2000 - June 30, 2001), the project provided 1,649 dental visits to more than 900 children enrolled in Medicaid. Medicaid reimbursement covered all expenses for the project. The \$7,500 grant covered half of the travel and lodging costs incurred by SEARHC. For the second year of the grant (October 2001 - December 2001), the project provided services to 605 children. The \$15,000 grant for the second year (SFY2002) covered travel and lodging costs for approximately four months of the project. The project has been a good collaboration between SEARHC and the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services in expanding access to dental services for children enrolled in Medicaid. The project has added specialty dental services (pediatric dentistry) in underserved areas.

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