



# Iowa Department of Human Services

Terry E. Branstad  
Governor

Kim Reynolds  
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer  
Director

## INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO.1788-D

**DATE:** May 2, 2017

**TO:** Iowa Medicaid Dentists

**APPLIES TO:** Dental

**FROM:** Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME)

**RE:** Medicaid Adult Dental Program Redesign

**EFFECTIVE:** July 1, 2017

### **Background:**

On December 13, 2016, a Request for Information (RFI) was issued regarding the delivery of dental services for the Dental Wellness Plan (DWP) and adult Medicaid members. The IME currently provides dental benefits to adult members via two different benefit packages and management strategies which vary based on a members Medicaid eligibility group.

Responses were received from 22 stakeholders. All RFI respondents showed interest in a unified adult dental program that eliminates complications due to Medicaid eligibility changes and churn. Respondents showed interest in a simplified program design to streamline administration and ease confusion. In addition to the review of the RFI responses, DHS considered information provided through the DWP evaluations conducted by the University of Iowa Public Policy Center.

As a result of this information, DHS believes changes are necessary to improve and refine the adult dental programs.

### **Effective July 1, 2017:**

Adult Medicaid members, age 19 and older, will be combined into a single, improved dental program. The movement of all adult Iowa Medicaid members to the DWP will result in a more seamless experience for members and providers.

### **New Combined DWP and Adult Fee-for-Service (FFS) Program**

The new DWP will incentivize members to utilize preventive dental services and to maintain good oral health. A simplified earned-benefit structure will address concerns about a member's ability to understand and access benefits due to eligibility churn between two programs. The existing dental carriers, Delta Dental of Iowa and MCNA Dental, will be administering the new DWP.

### **Benefit Design Modifications:**

The current DWP tiers will be removed from the earned benefits model design. This program modification is being made to address concerns raised through the independent program evaluations. Specifically, most current DWP enrollees never receive Enhanced or Enhanced Plus benefits due to Medicaid eligibility changes or churn. Approximately 3 percent of enrollees made it to tier two, and 4 percent moved through tier two to tier three.<sup>1</sup>

### **Benefits and Healthy Behaviors Incentive:**

- Members will have access to comprehensive dental benefits during their first year of enrollment:
  - Diagnostic/Preventive Dental Services
  - Exams and education
    - Cleanings
    - X-rays
    - Fluoride
  - Emergency and Stabilization Services
  - Restorative Services
  - Non-surgical Periodontal
  - Endodontic Care
  - Crowns
  - Tooth Replacements
  - Periodontal Surgery
- To maintain access to these comprehensive benefits in their second year of enrollment, members must complete the required healthy behaviors during their first enrollment year.
- These healthy behaviors include completion of **both**:
  1. An Oral Health Self-Assessment
  2. A Preventive Dental Exam
- Members over 50 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) will have a monthly premium contribution in year two, unless they complete healthy behaviors.
- Completion of healthy behaviors would waive a member's premium obligation for year two.
- Failure to complete the required healthy behaviors in this first year may result in a premium obligation of no more than \$3 per month.
- Members with a premium obligation who fail to make ongoing monthly premium payments will be eligible for emergency dental benefits only.

---

<sup>1</sup> McKernan, S., Momany, E., Ingleswar, A., Ayyagari, P., Singhal, A., Ghattas, A., and Damiano, P. (2016, December). *Access, Utilization & Cost Outcomes: Iowa Dental Wellness Plan Evaluation 2014-2016*.

## **What to Expect Next**

### **Communications:**

A comprehensive communication strategy has been developed to help inform members, providers and other impacted stakeholders of the upcoming changes. Communications will be tailored to the specific audience and will detail how these changes will affect them.

### **Provider Enrollment:**

Providers who want to participate in the redesigned DWP must be a participating provider in one or both of the DWP networks administered by Delta Dental of Iowa and MCNA Dental. Additionally, providers must be enrolled with the IME as at least a Prescribing/Referring IME dental provider.

If you have questions, please contact Iowa Medicaid Provider Services at 1-800-338-7909 Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by email at [imeproviderservices@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:imeproviderservices@dhs.state.ia.us).

All information regarding the DWP amendment, including the public notice, the waiver amendment, and other documentation regarding the proposal are available at <https://dhs.iowa.gov/public-notices/DWP-Redesign>.

Thank you for your continued participation in the DWP networks.