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State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor

2023-06

DATE: October 31, 2023

TO: Local Oral Health Programs

SUBJECT: Fluoride Varnish Guidelines

During the 2017-2022 grant cycle, the work plan contained fluoride varnish activities. In the Moving California Oral Health Forward 2022-2027 grant, work plan activities have changed to align with current dosing and frequency protocols and to address sustainability efforts.

The Office of Oral Health (OOH) recommends the following:

- Facilitate school-based programs that provide preventive services, including fluoride varnish applications, and bill for services to maintain sustainability. (Work plan activity 2.3.d and e)
- Refer children to care, thus allowing the dental provider to bill and provide appropriate care. (Work plan activity 2.3)
- Support screening and fluoride varnish application during well-child visits where the primary care physician bills and tracks the number of applications the child receives. (Work plan activity 6.3.a)
- Work with Managed Care Plans (MCP) to leverage efforts, promote sustainability and potentially work with the MCPs to obtain funding for fluoride varnish as they move towards meeting the Minimum Performance Level standard for the Topical Fluoride Varnish metric. (See the [Leveraging Medi-Cal Innovation to Promote Children's Oral Health: A Toolkit for Local Oral Health Programs](#) by Children Now).

Proposition 56 funds should be used to coordinate and facilitate the activities above. Please note that fluoride varnish should be applied 2-3 times a year as an evidence-based intervention. [ASTDD Fluoride Varnish: An Evidence-Based Approach Research Brief](#).

OOH will allow one-time fluoride varnish purchase and distribution to incentivize practitioners with new programs to begin applying fluoride varnish and billing, provided the need is



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demonstrated in a written proposal to OOH outlining the type of program (e.g., school-based dental program, primary care well-child visits), program implementation plan and sustainability plan.

For questions regarding this guidance, please email dentaldirector@cdph.ca.gov or your Program Consultant.

Sincerely,



Jayanth Kumar, DDS, MPH
State Dental Director
Office of Oral Health