

DATE: January 9, 2025
TO: ALL MEDI-CAL DENTAL MANAGED CARE PLANS
SUBJECT: **All Plan Letter (APL) 25-001: Disaster Assistance to Evacuated Members and Dental Offices**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Dental All Plan Letter (APL) is for the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to direct Medi-Cal Dental Managed Care (DMC) Plans to temporarily implement claim processing flexibilities regarding removable dental appliance replacements through July 31, 2025 due to the State of Emergency from the Palisades Fire that was declared by the Governor of the State of California.

BACKGROUND:

On January 7, 2025, the Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority contained in the State Constitution and statutes of the State of California, issued Executive Order (EO) N-2-25¹ and declared a State of Emergency for Los Angeles (19) and Ventura (56) Counties due to the Palisades Fire. DHCS allows exceptions to prior authorization requirements,² and has issued the following temporary flexibilities.

POLICY:

Removable dental appliances are fabricated by professionals and may be removed and inserted by the member, and include orthodontic retainers, space maintainers, partial and full dentures, and temporomandibular joint appliances.

DMC Plans shall exercise flexibility when evaluating claims submitted by Medi-Cal dental providers regarding prior authorization and frequency limitations for removable dental appliances for members who are residents of impacted counties. DMC Plans shall manually process, override denials, and accept claims from Medi-Cal dental providers without requiring prior authorization and shall not reject claims due to frequency limitations. DMC Plans shall accept in the Comments field on the claim: "Patient appliance(s) must be replaced due to State of Emergency."

¹ [1.8.2025-LA-Fires-EO-N-2-25.pdf](#)

² https://dental.dhcs.ca.gov/MCD_documents/providers/provider_handbook/PHB_section_02_program_overview.pdf
Medi-Cal Dental Provider Handbook, Section 2, Program Overview, page 2-13



DMC Plans shall also accept claims for exams and radiographs connected to the removable appliances. The negative impact of the fire alone shall meet the criteria of medical necessity. Damaged appliances shall be screened for repair. DMC Plans shall accept late claims from impacted Medi-Cal dental providers. DMC Plans shall accept in the Comments field on the claim: "Late claim submission due to State of Emergency." Other criteria outlined in the Medi-Cal Dental Manual of Criteria³ will still apply. Payment for removable appliances that have been fabricated by a lab but cannot be delivered to the member shall follow the requirements in the Medi-Cal Dental Provider Handbook⁴.

Claims for processing by this expedited method shall be effective from January 7, 2025 through July 31, 2025. DMC Plans shall approve claims with a date of service thirty (30) calendar days prior to the corresponding effective date when the removable appliance(s) was delivered to the member but because of the loss of dental office records, the service had not yet been billed. Medi-Cal dental providers shall submit the same documentation about loss in the State of Emergency for the fire as stated above for late billing.

REQUIREMENTS:

If the requirements contained in this APL, including any updates or revisions to this APL, necessitate a change in a DMC plan's contractually required policies and procedures (P&Ps), the plan must submit its updated P&Ps with and without Track Changes to DHCS' Medi-Cal Dental Services Division (MDSD) at dmcdeliverables@dhcs.ca.gov within 90 days of the release of this APL.

If a DMC plan determines that no P&P changes are necessary, the DMC plan must submit an email confirmation to dmcdeliverables@dhcs.ca.gov within 10 days of the release of this APL, stating that the DMC plan's P&Ps have been reviewed and no changes are necessary. The email confirmation must include the title of this APL as well as the applicable APL release date in the subject line.

DMC Plans are responsible for ensuring that their Subcontractors and Network Providers comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, contract requirements, and other DHCS guidance, including APLs and Policy Letters. These requirements must be communicated by each DMC Plan to all Subcontractors and Network Providers.

³ https://dental.dhcs.ca.gov/MCD_documents/providers/provider_handbook/PHB_section_05_MOC_SMA.pdf Medi-Cal Dental Provider Handbook, Section 5, Manual of Criteria and Schedule of Maximum Allowances

⁴ https://dental.dhcs.ca.gov/MCD_documents/providers/provider_handbook/PHB_section_02_program_overview.pdf Medi-Cal Dental Provider Handbook, Section 2, Billing and Payment Policies, Time Limitations for Billing, page 2-19.

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If you have any questions regarding this APL, please contact the Medi-Cal Dental Services Division, at dmcdeliverables@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Dana Durham
Chief, Medi-Cal Dental Services Division
Department of Health Care Services