



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



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
GOVERNOR

November 22, 2016

CHDP Provider Information Notice No.: 16-09

TO: ALL CHILD HEALTH DISABILITY AND PREVENTION (CHDP)  
PROGRAM PROVIDERS AND MEDI-CAL MANAGED CARE  
PLANS

SUBJECT: CHANGE IN STATE LAW REQUIRING CHDP PROVIDERS TO REFER  
CHILDREN TO A DENTIST BEGINNING AT AGE ONE

The purpose of this CHDP Program Provider Information Notice is to inform providers of a change in State legislation effective July 1, 2015 enacting a required dental referral beginning at age one for all CHDP children.

It has been CHDP policy to refer a child to a dentist beginning at age one (1), however, the State mandate previously specified an age three (3) dental referral unless a problem was suspected or detected, or as needed for maintenance of oral health. The change in legislation now aligns CHDP policy with statute. The statute is found in the California Health and Safety Code Section 124040 (6) (D):

[http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=124040.&lawCode=HSC](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=124040.&lawCode=HSC).

Health and Safety Code Section 124040 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

124040. (a)

(6) The health screening and evaluation part of each community child health and disability prevention program plan shall include, but is not limited to, the following for each child:

(A) A health and development history.

(B) An assessment of physical growth.

(C) An examination for obvious physical defects.

(D) Ear, nose, mouth, and throat inspection, including inspection of teeth and gums, and for all children **one** year of age and older who are eligible for Medi-Cal, referral to a dentist participating in the Medi-Cal program. (*Emphasis added*)

The new periodicity schedule for dental referrals by age reflecting this change can be found at: <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/chdp/Documents/DentalPeriodicity.pdf>.

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The provision for a child to be referred at any age if a problem is suspected or detected remains in force.

For information on how to make an appropriate dental referral and classify the urgency of need, please see the PM160 Dental Guide and Dental Referral Classifications found at:

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/chdp/Documents/CHDPDental/PM160DentalGuide.pdf>

The dental assessment and referral are integral parts of the CHDP health exam. Most children will not see a dentist at an early age without the referral from CHDP providers. Many families do not recognize the importance of primary teeth or the consequences of losing these teeth before expected exfoliation times. CHDP providers play a significant role in informing families of the importance of both caring for primary teeth and visiting a dentist regularly.

Establishing a dental home at an early age is an essential part of overall health. Without good oral health there can be no total health. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published its first policy related to a dental home in 2003. At that time it was stated that a dental home should be established by age one. Since then, AAP and oral health experts have published additional policies on children's oral health which confirm the age one dental home policy. See <https://www2.aap.org/oralhealth/PolicyStatements.html> which includes [Maintaining and Improving the Oral Health of Young Children \(2014\) \(681 KB\)](#).

Children should be referred to a dentist beginning by age one or earlier if a problem is suspected or detected. Then refer every six months as needed, with a minimum of once a year. This legislation enforces current CHDP policy of referring children to a dentist beginning by age one.

Thank you for your efforts to promote good oral health to CHDP families.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY PATRICIA MCMLELLAND**

Patricia McClelland, Chief  
Systems of Care Division