

Oral Health – Fluoride Varnish Application in Primary Care

A Quality Improvement Project from the Partners For Kids' Quality Improvement Coaching Program

Project Overview

The Partners For Kids' Quality Improvement (QI) Coaching Program offers primary care providers a QI project for oral health needs. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Bright Futures' guidelines, children should have fluoride varnish (FV) applied every six months in a primary care setting from the time of first tooth eruption up to six years of age. This project will provide best practice guidance and expert support in helping your practice address the oral health needs of your young patients.

Rationale

Dental caries is the most common chronic disease in the United States. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, in the United States 25% of 2- to 5-year-old children from low socioeconomic and minority groups experience 80% of dental disease. Regular and frequent exposure to fluoride varnish is associated with a decreased risk of dental caries in young children. The current American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommendation for children at high risk of caries is that fluoride varnish be applied to the teeth every 3 to 6 months. Among children with Medicaid, Ohio ranks 50th out of 50 states plus DC in dental utilization, so the primary care office represents an important opportunity for patients to receive this preventive dental care.

Project Components

- Implement **fluoride varnish application** in children 1 to 4 years of age utilizing approved fluoride varnish products.
- Create a standardized **process to identify and track** eligible patients.
- **Train staff** on the application process and knowledge of oral health issues.
- Provide **information resources** to families on fluoride varnish and connect patient with **dental provider**.

Practice Benefits

- Adhere to American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines for fluoride varnish application.
- Achieve improved patient outcomes.
- Eligible for Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Part IV credit.
- Strengthen QI knowledge and skills to better impact other disease processes.
- Improve billing of appropriate oral health codes.
- Customize to fit your practice.

Support Resources Available

- Expertise and guidance from Partners For Kids' quality team members.
- Training from Nationwide Children's Hospital (NCH) affiliated primary care and dental specialists.
- Education from, and consultation with, Partner For Kids' pharmacists.
- Access to Partner For Kids' prescribing guidelines.
- Data support using your practice electronic health record and claims data.

For more information, contact PFKQICoaching@NationwideChildrens.org

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