



2026 Best Practices Topical Fluoride Varnish

Partnership Tools, Programs, and Promising Practices:

- Watch Partnership's [Improving Measure Outcomes trainings](#) on *Preventive Care for 0-30 months* and *Preventive Care for 3-17 year olds* for more information about topical fluoride varnish.
- Partnership members can access transportation for non-emergency medical services for assistance in traveling to and from appointments. Members can access services by calling [Partnership Transportation Services](#) at (866) 828-2303, Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Patient Care:

- Fluoride varnish is recommended to be applied starting at tooth eruption through 20 years of age. This is a covered benefit through Partnership and Medi-Cal Dental.
- **Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Rural Health, and Tribal Health Dental Centers must update their coding practices for fluoride varnish applications to have their services counted toward the topical fluoride varnish measure.** Please see the Data and Coding section of this document for details (page 2).
- Partnership offers training on adding fluoride varnish application and implementation into your medical practice. Please see the Training Video section of this document for details (page 2).
- All counties have local oral health programs. Connect with the oral health program in your county for **free** resources and collaboration.
- Utilize “flag” alerts in the EMR / EHR system or pre-visit planning tools that each care team member / staff can use to identify and communicate to members / caregivers who are due for their screening services at every member / patient encounter.
- Prior to the visit, conduct chart scrubbing to determine if fluoride varnish is due, and use standing orders to streamline the process of application in the medical setting.
- Provide parents / caregivers with health education on topical fluoride and the importance of dental hygiene and regular dental visits for their kids.
- If the practice offers dental services, schedule the child's next dental visit during check-out, or as part of the rooming process.
- Provide parents / caregivers with a list of dentists in their area who see children and accept Medi-Cal Dental. Providers can be found on Smile California's [website](#).

Equity Approaches:

- Use any touchpoint, and especially the well-child visit, to connect patients with dental care.
- Assess barriers to completing regular dental visits and plan interventions to address these barriers.

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- Ensure patient information is consistent, welcoming, plain, person-centered, and language appropriate, as well as distributed in print and digital applications, per patient's preference.
- Have a conversation with parents / caregivers to confirm that information about topical fluoride varnish and dental care is mutually understood, parents / caregivers agree with any plans made, and they are given the opportunity to ask questions.

Data and Coding:

- Submit claims and encounter data within 90 days of service.
- Code fluoride varnish treatment as part of encounter / claims submission.
 - Medical Provider CPT – 99188
 - Dental Provider CDT
 - Include diagnosis code Z29.3 on the UB-04 claim form
 - The code should be listed as a secondary diagnosis (not the principal diagnosis)
 - Enter the code in Box 67A of the UB-04 form as Z293 (do not include the decimal point)
 - Pair Z29.3 with the appropriate dental code:
 - Code 03 is for fee-for-service members or Medi-Cal Managed Care members not enrolled in a Dental Managed Care (DMC) plan
 - Code 0521-T1015 SE is for MCP members enrolled in a DMC plan

Training Video:

- [Step-by-step video: fluoride application \(including billing\)](#)

Helpful Links:

2026 PCP QIP Technical Specifications:

- Measure Description
- Exclusions
- PCP QIP Full Points, Partial Points, Relative Improvement Definitions
- Notes for e-Reports and PQD

QIP e-Reports Portal:

- 2026 Detailed PCP QIP Technical Specifications
- Measure Reports
- Diagnosis Code Crosswalk Report
- QIP Member Report