



2026 Best Practices Topical Fluoride Varnish



Partnership Tools, Programs, and Promising Practices:

- Attend or view 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:

- **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).
- All counties have local oral health programs. Connect with the local oral health program in your county for **free** resources, training, and materials to implement fluoride varnish services in your primary care practice.
- Through your local oral health program, train provider teams to provide health education on dental fluoride varnish, prepare and complete a fluoride varnish, and document and code completion of the fluoride varnish.
- 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.
- Use standing orders for internal staff to implement.
- Conduct chart scrubbing prior to the visit to determine if screening / preventive services are due.
- Stock exam rooms with pre-prepared fluoride varnish kits to streamline completion.
- Provide parents / caregivers with health education on topical fluoride and the importance of dental hygiene and regular dental visits for their kids. Health education materials can be found on local oral health program websites.
- If 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. Lists can be found on local oral health program websites.

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Equity Approaches:

- Use the well-child visit to connect patients and parents / caregivers with dental care. Provide caregivers with information that preventative dental care is a covered Medi-Cal dental benefit for their child and an important part of their preventative care.
- Assess barriers to completing regular dental visits and plan interventions to address these barriers.
- Ensure member / patient information is consistent, welcoming, in plain person-centered, language appropriate, and delivered in traditional and electronic 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 were 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 it 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 Plan (DMC plan)
 - Code 0521-T1015 SE is for MCP members enrolled in a DMC plan

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