**Blue Plus MSC+ and MSHO Dental Scenario & Resource Guide**

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| Blue Plus Care Coordinators: Please use this scenario and resource guide when talking with your members about their questions or concerns related to receiving dental care. Tooth with tools |
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| **Scenario 1: Member cannot find a dentist who will accept their Medicaid coverage.*** Provide the member with the phone number to Delta Dental Member Services: 1-800-774-9049.
* Delta Dental will provide the member with contact information for three network providers, whom the member can call to request an appointment.
* If after the member calls the three network providers and learns there are no available appointments, the member may call Delta Dental Member Services back at 1-800-774-9049 and request to be transferred to the Delta Dental Care Coordination team for further assistance.
* **Members cannot contact the Delta Dental Care Coordination team directly.**

**OR*** **For Care Coordinator use only:** Care Coordinators may contact the Delta Dental Care Coordination Team at 1-866-303-8138 and request that a Delta Dental Coordinator assist in finding a provider and scheduling an appointment on the member’s behalf.
* **The Dental Coordinator will assist with the following**:
* Finding a provider and scheduling an appointment.
* Arranging for an interpreter, if needed.
* Setting up transportation through BlueRide, if requested
* Provide a reminder call (if not an emergency) to the member 4-5 days prior to appointment.
* For emergency appointments, the Dental CC team will work with the provider to have the member seen within 2 business days.
* For non-emergent needs, the Dental CC will work with the provider to have the member seen within 60 business days.
* **Provide the following information to the Delta Dental Care Coordination Team:**
* Member name, PMI number, health plan and product
* Current dental need (preventive/restorative/emergent/non-emergent)
* If the member will require transportation - include any special transportation needs (i.e. wheelchair, mobility issues)
* The date of the member’s most recent dental visit, and the provider’s name, if applicable. Delta Dental CC will likely have claims history to inform where the member was last seen, this is helpful but not required.
* Phone number and contact name for follow-up for both the Care Coordinator and member. (In case the call is disconnected, the Dental Coordinator will call back using this number provided).
* The Care Coordinator and member, if on the call, will remain on the line with the Delta Dental Coordinator. The Dental Care Coordinator will assist with finding a dentist and scheduling an appointment at the time of the call.
* **If the member cancelled the appointment or was a no-show for appt made**:
	+ The business day following the appointment date, the Delta Dental CC team representative will call the provider’s office to verify member’s attendance and inquire if there is a follow up appointment.
		- * If a follow up appointment has been scheduled, the Delta Dental CC team representative will create a new Care Coordination Reporting Form and set up a Reminder Call List to ensure the member receives a reminder call.
	+ The Delta Dental CC will attempt to get in touch with the member’s Care Coordinator or the member themselves if the appointment was cancelled, or if the member was a no show for appointment.
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| **Scenario 2: Member declines an annual dental visit because they are not experiencing pain/discomfort and/or have no concerns about their teeth.*** Provide the member with the “How Oral Health Affects Overall Health” handout available on the Care Coordination website.
* Reference these talking points:
* Many older adults have untreated root cavities and gum disease, or Periodontitis, which causes inflamed gums and weakens the bone structure of the jaw.
* In addition to causing pain and difficulty chewing, untreated cavities and gum disease contribute to a range of conditions and disorders. This is because bacteria from the mouth and chemicals from inflamed gums get into the bloodstream and airways and travel to other organs and systems, causing or worsening the severity of: heart disease, stroke, respiratory diseases and aspiration pneumonia, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, high blood pressure, immune disorders, osteoporosis, and cognitive decline and dementia.
* Studies show that people who have a good daily oral hygiene routine and who visit their dentist at least once per year can reduce bacteria in the mouth and slow the progression of gum disease.
* As one ages, it is common for gums to recede and expose the teeth’s root surfaces, increasing the risk of root decay. Root decay can progress quickly, but regular cleanings help to prevent or detect it early when it’s still treatable.
* Regular dental visits can also help detect oral cancer early when it can be easier to treat.
* More than 120 medical conditions can be detected by signs and symptoms in your mouth. Signs and symptoms to watch out for include swollen gums, bleeding gums, ulcers, dry mouth, bad breath, metallic taste, burning sensation, and growths (tumors). If the member is experiencing any of these symptoms, they should see a dental provider as soon as possible.
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| **Scenario 3: Member is managing multiple chronic or acute conditions and they, or their caregiver, does not believe oral health is a current priority.*** There are more than 400 drugs, many of them prescribed to treat chronic conditions, that cause dry mouth. Dry mouth is the largest cause of poor oral health and increased risk for oral disease among older adults. A dentist can prescribe prescription-strength fluoride toothpastes and mouthwashes, or an artificial saliva, that will provide relief for the discomfort of dry mouth and lower the risk of oral disease. Other common side effects of medications include gum overgrowth, yeast infections, staining of teeth, and excessive bleeding. If a member is experiencing these symptoms, they should speak with their provider about managing medication side effects.
* Oral health may not be a priority for families who are attending to the member’s other health concerns. However, caregivers should be informed about how good oral health can improve the comfort of their family member, and prevent other health complications, so they can make an informed decision about scheduling a dental visit. For example, research shows that treatment of periodontal disease helps people with diabetes control their blood sugar levels. The [Delta Dental web site](https://www.deltadentalmn.org/oral-health/health-tool-downloads) has more information about the connection between oral health and diabetes.
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| **Scenario 4: Member resides in the Nursing Home, and it is difficult and/or uncomfortable to travel to the dental office.*** Some families may determine that it is not in the best interest of their family member to have a dental exam or cleaning. However, caregivers should be informed about dental coverage and the importance of services that are available to nursing home residents, so they can make an educated decision on behalf of their loved one.
* There is federal and state legislation that requires Long Term Care Facilities to provide dental care either onsite or offsite for all residents. The Care Center should have an agreement with a dentist to deliver oral health care services and make referrals. If the member needs or wants to be seen offsite, the Care Center is required to assist in scheduling the dental appointment and arranging transportation. Blue Ride is available.
* During your review of the Nursing Home/ICF Assessment and Support Plan, the Care Coordinator should verify that the Facility has offered the appropriate dental services and assistance to the members.
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| **Scenario 5: Member/caregiver declines an annual dental visit because they do not have any of their original teeth.*** Bacteria and chemicals still build up in the mouths of those with dentures, passing into the bloodstream and affecting the health of the rest of the body.
* Those with full or partial dentures should see a dentist twice a year, the same as someone with all their original teeth.
* Everyone, including older adults with dentures, needs an annual oral cancer screening. The risk for oral cancer increases with age, and regular dental visits can help detect oral cancer early, when it’s easier to treat.
* Regular dental visits also help ensure that dentures are fitting properly and that the patient can comfortably chew a variety of foods to maintain a nutritious diet.
* Individuals with dry mouth can have difficulty wearing dentures because there isn’t the thin film of saliva to help hold them in place. A dentist can provide a prescription for artificial saliva to help address this problem.
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| **Scenario 6: The member is concerned about the out-of-pocket cost of additional services if problems are detected during a preventive dental exam.**There is no cost to MSC+ and SecureBlue (MSHO) members for these preventive dental benefits:* One dental exam per calendar year including x-rays.
* Two dental cleanings per calendar year, up to four times per calendar year if medically necessary.
* Fluoride varnish (once per calendar year)
* Fillings
* Periodontics including full mouth debridement and root planing and scaling to help prevent gum disease.

If the member has questions about their dental benefits, they can reach out to Delta Dental Member Services at 1-800-774-9049. Care Coordinators can assist by calling 1-866-303-8138.**Blue Plus covers additional dental benefits in 2024 for SecureBlue (MSHO) only members:****For additional benefits not covered by traditional Medicaid, refer to our Care Coordination** [**MSHO Supplemental Benefits**](https://carecoordination.bluecrossmn.com/msho/secureblue-msho-supplemental-benefits/) **webpage.** |
| **Scenario 7: The member has anxiety about seeing a dentist.*** Explain to the member or caregiver what they should expect at the dental appointment:
	+ The dentist will probably ask you to answer a few questions, including the date of your last checkup, any health updates or changes, and any tooth sensitivities.
	+ Besides carefully checking your teeth and gums, your dentist will check your bite (how your teeth come together) and your jaw (for any clicking or popping).
	+ If you wear dentures, your dentist will ask you a few questions about when you wear them and look for any signs of irritation.
* Determine who can give informed consent at the dental office and ensure they are present at the appointment.
* The member may be more comfortable seeing a dental provider with specialized expertise in treating geriatric patients, such as the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry, Walker Methodist Dental Clinic, or Apple Tree Dental.
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