

# Delta Dental of Washington

## Interim Policies and Guidance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This is an unprecedented time for both Member Dentists and patients covered by Delta Dental of Washington (DDWA). As practices plan to re-open and dentists continue to treat urgent and emergency conditions, we've put together a list of interim policies and guidance to help answer your questions and expedite claim processing. In addition to the policies and procedures below, we expect there will be situations in the months ahead where more policy exceptions may be made to adjust for ongoing changes in dentistry. We are committed to working with you and addressing extraordinary circumstances as they arise.

### Temporary Procedures

#### Protective Restoration (D2940)

Protective Restorations are already covered on most DDWA plans. They are not considered part of the cost of the permanent restoration provided on a future date of service.

#### Palliative (Emergency) Treatment of Dental Pain – Minor Procedure (D9110)

Palliative Treatment is already covered on most DDWA plans, and not considered part of the cost of another procedure provided on a future date of service. Please remember, when D9110 is reported, it is the procedure for that tooth on that day. Palliative treatment is *not reported in addition to* a restoration, endodontic therapy, etc. to treat a tooth on the same date of service.

#### Provisional Crowns

Office closures and restrictions on elective procedures can require provisional or temporary procedures to serve as long-term treatment solutions. For treatment date of services between March 4, 2020 - December 31, 2020, DDWA will cover provisional crowns (D2799) serving to restore a tooth for more than 30 days. The provisional crown will be covered up to the DDWA Maximum Allowable Fee, and the cost of the provisional will not be deducted from the future permanent crown.

Submission Instructions: To submit for the provisional crown, In the claim comment include the projected timeframe the patient will be in the provisional and include a clinical narrative and diagnostic-quality image. As with any crown, the provisional crown must meet clinical criteria to be a benefit. Treatment dates must be between March 4, 2020 and December 31, 2020.

### Extension of Benefits

You may have patients who started treatment that requires a return visit (a crown, for example), and were unable to return to have the treatment completed after losing their dental benefits. We are working

with our Groups to support benefit extensions past the typical timeframes. If your patients lost their dental benefits and were unable to complete a covered procedure that was started before March 19, 2020, please have them call our Customer Service Department for additional information.

## Timely Filing of Claims

We currently require that claims be filed within 180 days of treatment. Some offices may have missed claims filing deadlines due to offices closures. If a filing deadline is missed between March 19 and June 30, 2020, we will still process these benefit claims. No additional documentation is needed.

## Periodontal Scaling and Root Planing (SRP) Exceptions

We understand you may be scheduling longer treatment times to help preserve critical PPE while reducing patient exposure during multiple appointments. Effective immediately, DDWA will make exceptions to the current policy and allow payment for more than two quadrants of SRP on a date of service with supporting clinical documentation. Exceptions to the policy will be in place through December 31, 2020.

Submission Instructions: When you've diagnosed a patient with periodontitis and completed more than two quadrants of SRP on a single date of service, please add the words **"Clinical Review"** and the length of the appointment in your claim comments, and include a current perio chart, diagnostic-quality radiographs and chart notes for us to review your claim submission.

## Urgent Treatment

We are waiving clinical review of any urgent or emergency treatment completed between March 19 and May 31, 2020.

Submission Instructions: To expediate processing of these claims, please add the word **"Urgent"** in your comments when reporting urgent or emergency treatment completed.

## Extending Timeframes for Confirmations of Treatment of Cost

Until December 31, 2020, we are honoring expired confirmations of treatment and cost (predeterminations) that were approved on or after September 1, 2019.

## Patient in the Chair Hotline

We recognize there are situations when you have a patient in the chair, and require an immediate answer regarding benefits, eligibility, or clinical review. To help during these unique circumstances, we created a dedicated phone line to provide immediate resolution to your questions.

When you have a patient in the chair and need an immediate response, call 1-800-556-3852 anytime between 7:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. We will answer your questions or transfer you to a team that can best assist you. To help us reserve this phone line for urgent questions, we ask that you only call this number when you have a patient in the chair awaiting treatment.

For non-urgent general benefits and eligibility questions, please continue to use our website [DeltaDentalWA.com](http://DeltaDentalWA.com), or call our customer service team at 1-800-554-1907.

## Frequency Limitations

We recognize that frequency limitations on dental benefits may impact treatment decisions when your office re-opens. Fortunately, DDWA changed nearly all group contracts from once every six months to twice in a benefit period for most preventive services. This will allow for greater flexibility in scheduling patients.

Frequency limitations on dental benefits are negotiated with Groups and can't be changed unilaterally, but exceptional circumstances can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## Paying on the Prep Date vs. Seat Date

There is no change to Delta Dental policy that benefits are paid when treatment is completed, but if there's an exceptional circumstance during this time it will be considered on an individual basis.

## Coding for PPE as D1999

Delta Dental is actively working to understand the impact of changes to infection control measures in dental offices. There will be an ongoing financial impact to offices that is not clearly understood at this time and may change significantly over the coming months as the cost of PPE fluctuates with supply and demand. Delta Dental's current national policy is that separate fees for infection control and OSHA compliance are not billable to the patient. This policy would not be easily changed in the coming months. For those reasons, any D1999 code submitted for the above reasons will be adjudicated as not billable to the patient. We are, however, working on a program to help Member Dentists offset the rising costs of PPE outside of the claims submission process. We will provide more detail on this program as it is developed.

## Credentialing/Recredentialing

There are several providers whose licenses would have expired between April 1 and September 30, 2020 and we want you to be able to continue doing your work. We have revised recredentialing procedures and implemented additional outreach for license renewals through September 30, 2020. This extension will allow member dentists to focus on patient care and promote continued patient safety during the pandemic. If your license would have expired between April 1 and September 30, 2020 please be assured your credentialing status will not be terminated due to expired license. Please continue to work with WA DOH on your license renewal if it would have expired during this time.

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/ProfessionsNewReneworUpdate/LicenseExpirationExtensionFAQ>