

Join WellCare of Kentucky in Improving Pediatric Oral Health in Kentucky



The Kentucky Oral Health Coalition (KOHC) highlights the importance of integrating medical with dental care to increase access for vulnerable populations.¹ A recommended strategy for primary care providers (PCPs) is to utilize the Smiles for Life curriculum to learn how to apply fluoride varnish as a decay prevention therapy for children from 1 to 5 years old who are at risk for tooth decay.¹

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) provides guidance for fluoride varnish application for low caries risk patients every three to six months and for high caries risk patients every three months, with both groups starting at tooth emergence.² This is particularly important for children who lack access to dental providers, such as those residing in Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (DHPSAs), which are primarily rural counties.³ Within Kentucky, 74 of the 120 counties in Kentucky (62%) are designated as DHPSAs.³



You have been identified as a primary care provider who is serving enrollees in one of the DHPSAs in KY. WellCare of Kentucky is asking for you to join our efforts to improve pediatric oral health in your community. A national study of Medicaid claims data for children under 6 years of age showed that children residing in non-urban counties were less likely to receive fluoride application in medical offices compared to children residing in metro counties.⁴

Here is how you can support this initiative:

ASK	LOOK	DECIDE	ACT	DOCUMENT
about oral health risk factors and symptoms of oral disease.	for signs that indicate oral health risk or active oral disease.	on the most appropriate response.	Offer preventive interventions and/or referral for treatment.	as structured data for decision support and population management.

(continued)

wellcareky.com





The CPT code for applying fluoride varnish is **99188**.

Implement oral health screenings for enrollees under age 21.

▶ **ASK:**

Use the oral health screening questionnaire.

Decide:

- ✓ Who will complete the screenings?
- ✓ Who will apply fluoride varnish?
- ✓ Who will refer to the dentist?
- ✓ Who will provide nutritional education to prevent caries?

▶ **LOOK:**

Complete oral exam; use *Smiles for Life: A National Oral Health Curriculum*.

Start small, targeting children under 5 and age 4 as of end of MY24.

- ✓ Goal is for patients to received two fluoride applications between the Measurement Year <Jan. 1, 2024 to Dec. 31, 2024 and Jan. 1, 2025 to Jan. 1, 2025>.
- ✓ Provide oral health and nutrition education to prevent caries.
- ✓ Document any caries risks identified using Z Codes for risks identified:
 - Z91.841 Risk for dental caries, low.
 - Z91.842 Risk for dental caries, moderate.
 - Z91.843 Risk for dental caries, high.
 - Z91.849 Unspecified risk for dental caries.

▶ **DECIDE:**

Apply fluoride varnish ensuring to code CPT 99188 for reimbursement under the KY MCD Fee schedule of \$18.75. It is suggested to append a Z modifier for preventive services (e.g., Prophylactic fluoride administration Z29.3).

- ✓ Cost of fluoride kits: Cost is approximately \$2 or less.
- ✓ Fluoride varnish must be applied by a physician or other qualified healthcare professional, a clinic staff member who works under the supervision of a qualified healthcare professional, or other allied health providers who have completed one of the recommended online FVA trainings.

▶ **ACT:**

Refer enrollee to a dentist for any suspected oral disease.

Indicators for referral would include:


- ✓ Pain and bleeding associated with brushing, flossing, or eating.
- ✓ Signs of tooth decay.
- ✓ Signs of gum inflammation.
- ✓ Presence of tooth decay in the immediate family.
- ✓ Signs of oral dryness.

Tools and Resources

- ✓ Oral Health Assessment toolkit.
- ✓ Fluoride application step by step.

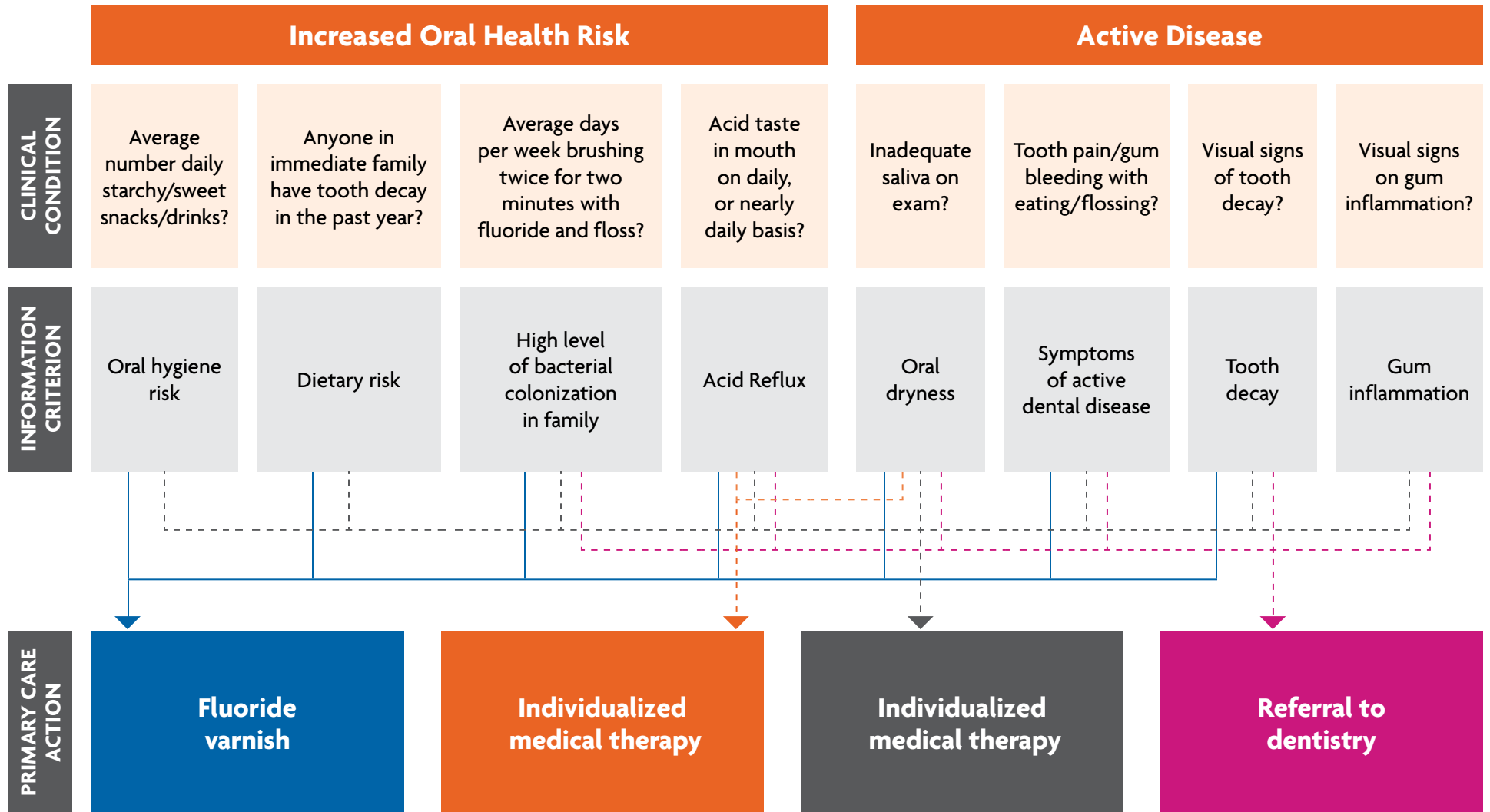
 Please visit the KY Oral Health Program for further information: chfs.ky.gov/agencies

 Call the Oral Health Program at **1-502-564-3604** for additional information and to order fluoride varnish supplies.

 E-mail: Dr. Julie Watts McKee, State Dental Director – Oral Health Program (DPH) at juliew.mckee@ky.gov

(continued)

This decision tree is helpful for implementing this process:



Members are eligible to earn points for completing healthy behaviors in the *My Health Pays* program. Please reference the *My Health Pays* program flyer.

(continued)

Tips for Successful Implementation



- ✓ Educate all staff, including front desk personnel, on caries risk assessment and the value of fluoride varnish.
- ✓ Train all clinicians on application procedures.
- ✓ Identify a varnish champion who answers questions, understands billing issues, assigns tasks, orders the varnish, and maintains supplies.
- ✓ Divide tasks among staff to avoid time burdens for one person.
- ✓ Store supplies in exam rooms or in a portable kit.
- ✓ CPT code effective January 2015 for fluoride varnish application is 99188. It is suggested to append a Z modifier for preventive services (e.g., Prophylactic fluoride administration Z29.3).
- ✓ Update billing forms with varnish code(s).
- ✓ Have copies of educational handouts pre-printed to give to parents.

Are you ready to make an impact on pediatric oral health?

- ▶ Watch this short Case Study video on how you too can make an impact:
 - [youtube.com/watch?v=27q7rt5qHJQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27q7rt5qHJQ)
- ▶ Take these trainings from the Smiles for Life Fluoride Varnish: State Training;
 - Online Courses:
smilesforlifeoralhealth.org/courses/caries-risk-assessment-fluoride-varnish-and-counseling/
 - Downloadable Courses:
smilesforlifeoralhealth.org/teach-curriculum/course-6-caries-risk-assessment-flouride-varnish-counseling/
 - To receive your CME credit, you must complete the trainings and posttest evaluation:
smilesforlifeoralhealth.org/continuing-education/continuing-education-information/dental-info/
- ▶ Additional CME resources are available to address health equity and disparities:
 - aap.org/en/catalog/categories/primary-care/fighting-racism-to-advance-child-health-equity
- ▶ Additional preventative coding resources are available here:
 - downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/Coding%20Preventive%20Care.pdf



Thank you for your support.

If you have any further questions, please contact your Quality Practice Advisor.

References:

1. Kentucky Oral Health Coalition. (2021). "Integrating Oral Health into Healthcare Settings." kyoralhealthcoalition.org/integrating-oral-health-into-healthcare-settings/
2. Clark, M. B., Keels, M. A., Slayton, R. L., Section on Oral Health, Braun, P. A., Fisher-Owens, S. A., Huff, Q. A., Karp, J. M., Tate, A. R., Unkel, J. H., & Krol, D. (2020). "Fluoride Use in Caries Prevention in the Primary Care Setting." *Pediatrics*, 146(6). doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-034637ht
3. Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. (2022). "Health Professional Shortage and Medically Underserved Areas." Health Care Access Branch. chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dpqi/hcab/Pages/hpsamua.aspxht
4. Geiger, C. K., Kranz, A. M., Dick, A. W., Duffy, E., Sorbero, M., & Stein B. D. (2019). "Delivery of Preventive Oral Health Services by Rurality: A Cross-sectional Analysis." *Journal of Rural Health*, 35(1): 3-11. doi.org/10.1111/jrh.12340