



Our first care is your health care
ARIZONA HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT SYSTEM

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TO: Health Plan and Program Contractors, Medical Directors/ Dental Program Managers

FROM: R. L. Birdwell, D.D.S., Dental Director

SUBJECT: Change in Dental Benefit: Dental Sealants on Primary Teeth

The Arizona Legislature recently passed a bill to close the expected \$1.6 billion shortfall in the 2009 State budget, including reductions in AHCCCS expenditures. Due to these budgetary shortfalls, AHCCCS recently reduced its Fee-for-Service fee schedule for many providers by 5%. This fee reduction was not applied to dental services.

In response to budgetary concerns, AHCCCS is in the process of reviewing the medical necessity of all services that are currently provided, including dental services. Based on published studies (e.g. JADA 2008; 139 [3]) we have determined that current evidence does not support continued use of dental sealants on *primary teeth* as an efficacious method of preventing dental decay.

Therefore, effective May 1, 2009, dental sealants on **primary second molars** will no longer be an AHCCCS covered dental benefit. Sealants will continue to be a benefit on permanent first and second molars. All contracted health plans have been notified of this change.

Please be aware that the Legislature is currently considering options regarding the 2010 State budget. AHCCCS will continue to review the medical necessity and cost effectiveness of all current services in light of the projected budgetary shortfalls. You may contact Robert Birdwell, D.D.S., Dental Director, 602-417-4198, with questions regarding this announcement or other AHCCCS dental program issues.