Date: July 23, 2012

Subject: Head Start Dental Home Initiative

To: All HealthChoices and Voluntary PH-MCOs – Statewide

From: Joan Morgan, Director, Bureau of Managed Care Operations

Purpose:

To notify all HealthChoices (HC) and Voluntary PH-MCOs of the Department of Public Welfare’s (the department’s) collaboration with the Pennsylvania Head Start Association (PHSA) and the approximately 60 state-wide Head Start grantees administering local Head Start programs.

Background:

The department has been approached by the Pennsylvania Head Start Oral Health Taskforce to establish a collaborative partnership with the Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP), the HealthChoices Managed Care Organizations (HC-MCOs) and their participating dental networks to develop a process of coordinated dental care for the children enrolled in the local Head Start programs across the state. This initiative will be piloted with a limited number of local Head Start programs in the Southwest HealthChoices zone and is expected to expand to include all HealthChoices zones.

Discussion:

The Pennsylvania Head Start Oral Health Taskforce has identified local Head Start programs that are having difficulty obtaining follow up dental care for enrolled children. Many of these children receive Medical Assistance but do not have a dental home. There is also difficulty in getting dentists to do pre-op clearance for Special Needs children. These children may require sedation and in some cases parents are hesitant to provide consent. Parents need to be encouraged and educated to ensure their child receives the necessary treatment for poor oral health and the importance of treatment to prevent further health issues. In addition, dental networks need to be educated and possibly expanded to include more dentists willing to provide this necessary care. There is a great need for better care coordination between the PH-MCOs and the local Head Start Programs operating within the HC Zones. Issues pertaining to other EPSDT-related services should also be addressed through this effort.

Next Steps:

The department is requesting that each PH-MCO's Special Needs Coordinator identify a single point of contact (SPOC) that will serve as the liaison between the MCO and the SPOC for each County Head Start program. The responsibilities of the PH-MCO SPOC will be to:

- Establish a system of service coordination through collaborative case management between the PH-MCO and the local Head Start program office.
- Outreach to the parents/guardians of identified children to coordinate dental care/access.
- Provide education to parents and guardians regarding the importance of proper dental care, addressing possible fears concerning dental treatment (Head Start participants should be targeted; however, dental education/outreach should be available to all members.)
- Follow-up with the members identified and the Head Start SPOC to determine if services were received; if not, what were the barriers to care, and determine what was or is being done to resolve those barriers.
- To assist the PH-MCOs in establishing a robust communication link with the Head Start programs located within the PH-MCO's zone of operation, contact information for the Head Start grantees can be obtained through the PHSA website that has a section dedicated to oral health issues. The link below opens a page with an interactive map of Pennsylvania:
  
  - Clicking on any county map will open a subsequent page with a listing of the Head Start and Early Head Start Programs operating in that county.
  - Contacts for each program can be found on the page. If an "Oral Health Contact" is listed, that person would generally be the best contact for exchange of dental health information. If no specific health contact is listed, the Program Director should be the initial contact.
- Having identified the appropriate contact person at the local Head Start program, the SPOC for the PH-MCO should outreach to the local Head Start programs to initiate the communication process to facilitate the case management collaborations outlined previously.
- If there is a change to the PH-MCO SPOC, there should be proactive communication between the PH-MCO SPOC and each of the local Head Start program contacts to identify and introduce the SPOC replacement to prevent significant disruption in the liaison communication process.

Obsolete:

This MC OPS memo will remain in effect until further notice.