

RURAL **HEALTH** WORKSHOP

Fluoride Varnish: A Reimbursable Practice for Medical Providers



Speakers

- MeChaune Butler, MPA
 - Oral Health Promotion Manager
 - Well-Ahead Louisiana
- Brandon Bueche, MBA
 - Dental Medicaid Program Manager
 - LDH-Healthy Louisiana

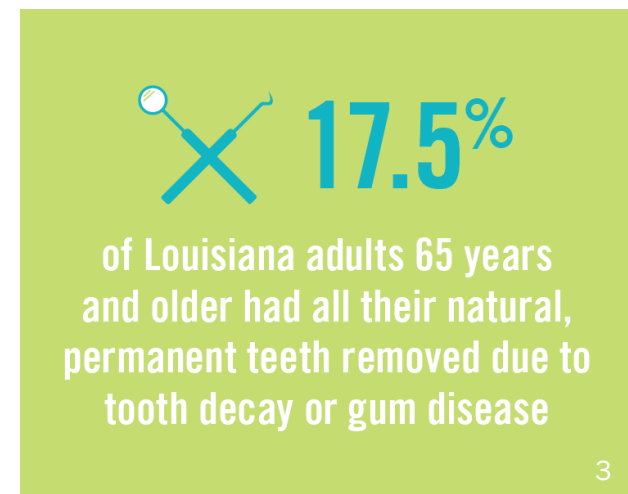
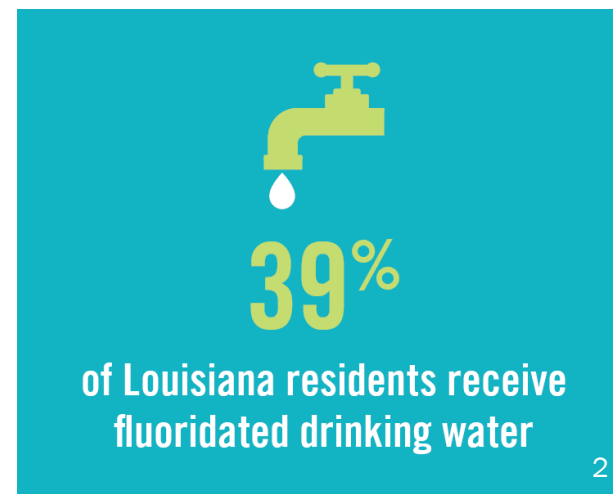
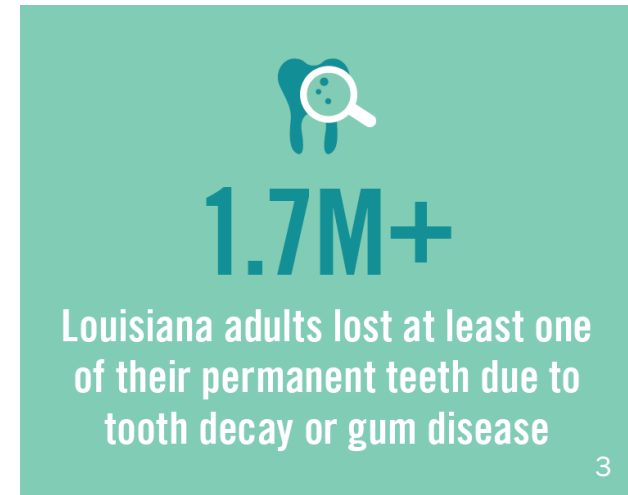
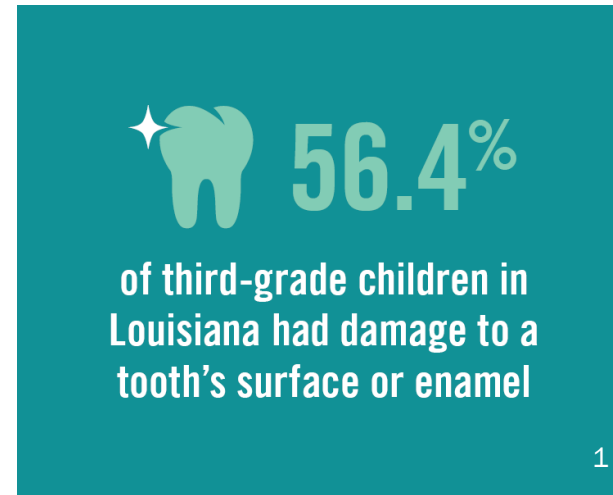


Learning Objectives

- Understand the benefits of fluoride varnish
- Identify and understand Louisiana's Fluoride Varnish Policy for reimbursement
- Understand how to implement fluoride varnish and receive reimbursement
- Know how to access the online Smiles For Life (SFL) training
- Become an Oral Health Champion!

Oral Health in Louisiana

Oral Health in Louisiana



¹ Bright Smiles for Bright Futures Report, 2017-18.

² Water Fluoridation Reporting System (WFRS), 2018.

³ Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2018.

⁴ Primary Care, Dental Health, and Mental Health [HRSA Data Warehouse](#); Updated 10/22/21.

Dental Care in Louisiana

Dental care is the **#1** unmet health need.



This is proven among low-income children, older adults, and those with special health care needs.

Medicaid and Oral Health

- Medicaid-eligible children are 3 to 5 times more likely to have untreated dental decay
- Of 421,526 Medicaid enrollees under the age of 21, only 48% saw a dentist for at least one service
- 860,000 Louisiana children receive coverage under the state Medicaid program and have access to dental benefits
 - Yet fluoride varnish application remains low for this population

Why Fluoride Varnish?

Fluoride Varnish

- Fluoride varnish is a coating applied to children's teeth to prevent tooth decay
- It takes less than 2 minutes to apply and dries instantly
- Studies have shown that children who receive fluoride varnish every 3 months have fewer cavities



Fluoride Varnish

- Fluoride varnish is simply a resin with 22 times the concentration of fluoride found in fluoride toothpaste
- It dries almost instantly when applied to the teeth and provides excellent protection against dental caries for months.
- Applied every six months
- Application four times a year offers even greater protection, but in practice it may be hard to apply even twice a year with older kids, as we see them less often

Fluoride Varnish

- Evidence-based preventive intervention
- Proven to decrease dental caries
- Proven to decrease oral health disparities

The Role of Primary Care Providers in Oral Health

- Poor access to dental care for youngest patients, whom primary care providers see most frequently during the first years of life
- Primary care providers are in a unique position to educate parents, encourage healthy habits, and offer preventive care.
- Changing the oral health culture of their patients will eventually produce improved oral health as adults



How Reimbursement Works in Louisiana

Louisiana Gets on Board!

- December 2011
- **Louisiana** approved expanding Medicaid coverage to reimburse non-dental providers for applying fluoride varnish twice each year to the teeth of Medicaid recipients between 6 months to 5 years of age

Louisiana Policy

- Medicaid pays for fluoride varnish from 6 months through 5 years of age, as often as every 6 months
- Medicaid pays \$24.06 each time
- Must be done during a scheduled well or sick visit; no “varnish only” visits
- Billing CPT Codes:
 - CPT Code 99188: Application of topical fluoride varnish
 - ICDM-10 Code Z41.8: Need for fluoride varnish application

Louisiana Policy: What Disciplines Can Bill?

- Dental Providers
- Physicians
- Nurse Practitioners
- Physician Assistants
- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical Nurses
- Certified Medical Assistants

Information for Eligible Providers

Smiles for Life Training

Smiles for Life
A national oral health curriculum

- <https://wellaheadla.com/fluoride-varnish>
- Required Training Module #6
- Physicians and nurses can both receive CME credit for this!
 - You must be able to certify that you and all providers (billers and applicators) in your office are adequately trained, and retain copies of certificates onsite.

Smiles for Life Training

Smiles for Life
A national oral health curriculum

- Take approximately 45 minutes
- Register
- Take the test
- Print out your certificate
- Keep it on file
- Start applying varnish!

Tips for Success!

- Educate all staff, including front desk personnel, on caries risk assessment and the value of fluoride varnish
- Treat application of varnish as a preventive vaccine, and order it as such
- Train all clinicians on application procedures
- Assign a varnish champion who answers questions, understands billing issues, assigns tasks, orders varnish, and maintains exam room supplies
- Assign a staff person to keep Dentist Referral list updated

Tips for Success!

- Divide tasks among staff to avoid time burdens for one person.
- Store supplies in exam rooms or in a portable kit.
- Update billing forms with varnish code(s).
- Have copies of educational handouts preprinted to give to parents (post them in rooms, too!)

Questions?

Contact Information

- MeChaune Butler, Oral Health Promotion Manager, Well-Ahead Louisiana
 - Mechaune.Butler@la.gov
 - 225-342-7804
- Brandon Bueche, Dental Medicaid Manager, LDH-Healthy Louisiana
 - Brandon.Bueche@la.gov
 - 225-384-0460

Join the Provider Education Network!

- The Provider Education Network provides tools, training and technical assistance opportunities that help you provide the best possible care to your patients and help make every angle of your facility more effective.
- Join today at www.wellaheadla.com/join-provider-education-network

RURAL **HEALTH** WORKSHOP

Thank you for joining us!

