



School Health: Telephone (717) 787-2390
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DATE: June 1, 2015
FROM: Beth Anne Bahn, Director, Division of School Health
RE: Dental Hygiene Services Program

Dear School Superintendents/CEOs and School Dental Hygienists:

We appreciate your school's commitment to providing students with preventive dental care and dental health education through the Dental Hygiene Services Program (DHSP). The annual reports show this program has helped thousands of students each year since its inception in 1963.

As previously announced, the Department's annual reimbursement system (SHARRS) has been upgraded and is scheduled to open for the 2014-15 reports. Reimbursement formulas have not changed, and in general, the data required for submission is essentially unchanged. Updated tally sheets and an updated SHARRS hardcopy report as well as the new SHARRS manual can be located on the SHARRS page of the school health website at:

http://www.health.pa.gov/My%20Health/School%20Health/Pages/Reimbursement-SHARRS.aspx#.VWcWE8jD_IU

NOTE: The process to request annual DHSP authorization and to report dental hygiene services has changed. Beginning with the authorization for school year 2016-17, the authorization process will be electronic through SHARRS. Therefore, do not submit old authorization forms and do not send your dental hygiene plan to our attention. For school year 2015-16, please submit the hardcopy authorization form by September 1st and division staff will enter the authorization information electronically into SHARRS. The hardcopy report and additional documents are located on the Dental Hygiene Services Program page of the school health website at:

http://www.health.pa.gov/My%20Health/School%20Health/Pages/Quick%20Links/Dental%20Health/Dental-Hygiene-Services-Program.aspx#.VWcWtMjD_IU

NOTE: The DHSP plan requirements have not changed but they have been rewritten (1) to provide essential criteria as a baseline for all dental hygiene plans; (2) to provide essential criteria standards for dental hygiene plans that allows flexibility; (3) to include information on Public Health Dental Health Practitioners (PHDHPs) and Mobile Dentists; and (4) to reformat the authorization and report data for electronic submission in SHARRS. Please refer to the enclosed documents, including excerpts from the *draft* update of the *Guidelines for the Dental Health Program for Pennsylvania's School-Age Population*. Pay particular attention to the following:

- Each school entity is required to have a written DHSP plan that includes the essential criteria identified in the draft guidelines; the plan must have written approval of the School Dental Hygienist, the School Dentist, and school administration. Do not submit the written plan to the Department. The "new" annual authorization combines the "old" authorization request and your written plan. **For school year 2015-16, please submit the hardcopy authorization form by September 1st to my attention at the following address:**

Beth Anne Bahn, RN, CSN, CRNP
Director Division of School Health
Pennsylvania Department of Health
Bureau of Community Health Systems
625 Forster Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120

- The essential criteria provide standards across all DHSP plans yet allows flexibility for school entities to provide dental hygiene services based on the specific needs of its students/school, for example, some school programs employ a Certified School Dental Hygienist (CSDH) full-time while other schools employ them part-time; some programs rely on the CSDH to manage all phases of the program while others rely on the Certified School Nurse to collect data on dental examinations by Family Dentists and/or coordinate the scheduling of dental screens by the CSDH; some schools secure the services of a Mobile Dentist Group in the capacity of the School Dentist while others secure their services as a Family Dentist.
- There is no longer language on a “modified dental program” since the essential criteria for the DHSP allows each school entity to create a plan that is specific to the dental health needs of its students/school. In addition, dental reimbursement has always been categorized as either a “Mandated Program” or a “Dental Hygiene Services Program” for reimbursement purposes.
- According to PA law and regulation, dental hygienists working in the school must be certificated by the PA Department of Education as a CSDH. Certification by the State Board of Dentistry as a PHDHP is not the same as – and does not meet – the requirement for certification by the PA Department of Education as a CSDH. We are aware that courses have not been available for hygienists seeking certification, and we are working with the Department of Education to remedy this.
- We recommend school administrators and hygienists review all the documents, in particular, the scope and standards of professional practice for dental hygienists and PHDHPs in the “Legal Aspects for the School Dental Health Program”.

Thank you, in advance, for your assistance and cooperation as we move to this new process. Please direct questions to division staff by email at c-paschool@pa.gov or by phone at 717-787-2390.