



**LEGAL  
SERVICES**

INCORPORATED

## **WHAT IS MEDICAID?**

Medicaid is a health insurance program funded by the federal and state government for people with limited income and resources. Medicaid helps pay for medical costs like doctor visits, hospital care, nursing care, and medical-aid devices. People with no medical insurance or inadequate medical insurance can be covered by Medicaid if they meet certain income and resource requirements.

## **CAN I CHOOSE MY OWN MEDICAID DENTIST?**

**YES.** Medicaid members have the right to choose their dentist. The dentist has to have a license and be registered and enrolled in the New York State Medicaid system.

## **HOW DO I KNOW I AM PICKING THE RIGHT DENTIST FOR ME?**

Many residents choose to see the dentist who comes to their adult home because it is convenient. **BUT** there are many dentists and dental clinics in New York. Call your Medicaid managed care plan to find a dentist in your plan's network. Always check with your dentist to make sure they accept your managed care or long-term care plan before receiving services.

## **WHAT DENTAL PROCEDURES DOES MEDICAID COVER?**

Medicaid does **not** offer recipients full dental care. Medicaid covers only **essential** dental services. You are entitled to a regular dental check up and cleaning every six months. You are also entitled to three total dental clinic visits per year.

## **WHAT SERVICES DOES MEDICAID NOT COVER?**

Medicaid usually does not cover root canals or bridgework. Medicaid usually pays for pulling and replacing your bad tooth rather than *fixing* the tooth.

**Medicaid will NOT pay for the following dental services:** Dental implants • Permanent bridgework (except for cleft palate cases) • Same-day full or partial dentures • Molar root canal therapy to fix infections (there are exceptions) • Crown lengthening to help fix a tooth • Replacement of partial or full dentures before eight years (except for certain dental emergencies) • Dental work for beauty or cosmetic reasons • Periodontal surgery to reshape different parts of your gums or jaw bone (there are some exceptions) • Adult orthodontics like braces (there are some exceptions).

## **WILL MEDICAID PAY FOR DENTURES?**

**YES.** Medicaid pays for both full and partial dentures when you need dentures to help with a serious health condition or a condition that affects your ability to go to work. Medicaid does **NOT** replace dentures for at least eight years. This is true even if even if your dentures are broken, stolen or lost. Medicaid will **NOT** replace your dentures before the eight-year mark unless: (1) your dentures cannot be fixed, or, (2) you lose a tooth you need to support your denture or there is some other serious change in your mouth. Medicaid will, however, pay to fix broken dentures.

## **WHAT IF I NEED TO GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM?**

Medicaid covers emergency dental services when you are suffering severe, life threatening, or potentially disabling conditions that require immediate medical intervention. You do not need pre-approval to go to the emergency room. Medicaid will evaluate your emergency room visit afterward to make sure it was a true emergency covered by your plan.

## **HOW DO I GET PRE-APPROVAL FOR A DENTAL PROCEDURE?**

Your dentist must get a “service authorization” before giving you dental services. Medicaid always approves covered dental procedures, **UNLESS** you have reached your Annual Medicaid limit. If you are over your limit, you can ask the dentist to complete a “Medicaid Threshold Override” application for you. You should receive a warning letter in the mail when you are getting close to your annual limit.

## **WHAT IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH THE DENTAL CARE I RECEIVE?**

Are your dentures not fitting right? Does your dentist want to pull healthy teeth? If you think your dentist is providing bad care, complain to the NYS Department of Health by calling 1-800-206-8125 or the NYS Attorney General’s Health Care Bureau by calling 1-800-428-9071.

## **WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?**

Call MFY Legal Services, Inc.'s Adult Home Advocacy Project toll free at 877-417-2427 Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**DISCLAIMER: This fact sheet gives general information  
for NYC residents; it is NOT legal advice.**