



Health Information and Education Center Understanding EPSDT (North Dakota Health Tracks)

If your child utilizes Medicaid, a vital program for children with disabilities and special health care needs is the EPSDT program.

Why is EPSDT (North Dakota Health Tracks) important?

EPSDT is the acronym for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit for Medicaid. Essentially, it is an important benefit for children. Under EPSDT requirements states must provide comprehensive health and developmental assessments, and vision, dental and hearing services to children and youth up to age 21. The goal of these prevention services is the early identification of conditions that can impede a child's growth and development.

In addition to the screening EPSDT also covers the diagnostic and treatment services necessary to improve acute and chronic physical and mental health conditions. EPSDT is especially important to children with disabilities and special health care needs.

What Services Are Covered?

The EPSDT benefit includes screening services as well as diagnostic and treatment services. Screening services are required in four areas: medical, vision, dental and hearing.

The medical screen must include:

- ♥ A comprehensive health and developmental history, including an assessment of both physical and mental health
- ♥ A comprehensive unclothed medical exam
- ♥ Appropriate immunizations
- ♥ Laboratory tests, including lead blood testing and
- ♥ Health education, including anticipatory guidance.

Once physical or mental health conditions are discovered, the EPSDT benefit

covers necessary health services to correct or improve them. The EPSDT requirement states that mandatory and optional Medicaid services for children be available if it is deemed "medically necessary".

Screenings are set up by the state to occur at preset, established intervals. If your child receives Medicaid, contact the local County Social Service office nearest you. Ask for information regarding Health Tracks.

In addition to the scheduled periodic screening examinations, EPSDT covers visits to a health care provider at "such other intervals, indicated as medically necessary, to determine the existence of an illness or condition. These screens are called "interperiodic screens." Persons outside the health care system (eg., a school teacher or parent) can determine the need for an interperiodic screen.

(National Health Law Program)

In addition to the screening, treatment services possibly are available.

Defining Medical Necessity

Many states have a definition for medical necessity, the following statement is taken from (*Defining Medical Necessity, Strategies for Promoting Access to Quality Care for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Mental Retardation and Other Special Health Care Needs*)

Specifications for Defining Medical Necessity Include:

1. A covered service or item is medically necessary if it will do, or is reasonably expected to do one or more of the following:

Arrive at a correct medical diagnosis

Prevent the onset of an illness, condition, injury, or disability

Reduce, correct or ameliorate the physical, mental, developmental, or behavioral effects of an illness, condition, injury or disability.

Assist the individual to achieve or maintain sufficient functional capacity to perform age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate daily activities.

2. Insurer must determine medical necessity on the basis of health information provided by the following persons: the individual (as appropriate for his or her age and communicative abilities), the individual's family, the primary care physician, and consultants with appropriate specialty training, as well as other providers, programs, multidisciplinary teams, educational institutions, or agencies that have evaluated the individual.

3. The determination of medical necessity must be made on an individual basis and must consider

The functional capacity of the person and those capacities that are appropriate for persons of the same age or developmental level

Available research findings, health care practice guidelines, and standards issued by professionally recognized organizations or government agencies.

4. Final determinations will be made by a physician in concert with the following persons: the individual's primary care physician; a consultant with experience appropriate to the individual's age, disability, or chronic condition; and the individual and/or family.
5. Medically necessary services must be delivered in a setting (e.g., an individual's home, school, child care center, workplace, or community based agency) that is appropriate to the specific health needs of the individual.

For more information about EPSDT or medical necessity contact FVND

To contact FVND call 888-522-9654, www.geocities.com/ndfv/ or write PO Box 163 Edgeley, ND 58433

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