

**September 5, 2007**

Dear Avesis Doctor:

Avesis is continuing to strive to carefully communicate with all dentists and dental specialists in our Medicaid network for Georgia. We are aware that there are many changes being implemented, so we want to clarify some issues that have been brought to our attention. If you have additional questions, please give me or Nichole Mitchell a call to get an answer.

We are intending to continue to send an informational letter to the entire network on a quarterly basis. These letters will provide explanation and information for you and your staff. Please try to keep them for reference in your Avesis office manual.

As we have stated in both of our two previous letters concerning the July 15<sup>th</sup> changes in the Medicaid dental program, we want to be sure your office clearly understands all of the details of the changes and how to get answers and submit claims over the Internet. Avesis is working to make our web site – [www.avesis.com](http://www.avesis.com) – to be a strong source of support and answers for your office team.

As we announced in our last letter, Avesis has begun a program of office reviews. The intent of these reviews is to monitor the dental services performed by all of our network dentists and will be continuing our office reviewing moving forward. We expect to have visited all offices within our Georgia network by the end of 2008. Please try to cooperate and find a time for our staff to visit your office when you are contacted.

The following are clarification regarding the changes that have been implemented as of July 15<sup>th</sup>. Most of these comments are based upon questions from network dentists or issues found during our office reviews. Please review with your office team to confirm whether these could apply to your office.

#### **A) SYMPTOMS FOR THIRD MOLAR EXTRACTIONS.**

Beginning July 15th, Avesis has implemented a requirement for all impacted third molars to be extracted (ADA Codes D7220, D7230 and D7240) there must be evidence of symptoms. In the understanding of this guideline from Avesis, a symptom would be either:

1. evidence of destruction of an adjacent tooth on radiograph.
2. evidence of a cyst, abscess or other pathology visible on radiograph
3. evidence of a mesioangular or distoangular impaction which would not be able to erupt – seen on x-ray.
4. a lack of sufficient eruptive space – seen on radiograph.

The key to our guidelines is that simply eruptive pain is not considered a symptom that warrants extraction without one of the additional factors indicated above. Please note that this rule does not apply to third molars which are simple or surgical extractions.

If you have any questions about the requirements for coverage for a specific third molar, you can direct questions to Dr. Broda at [mbroda@avesis.com](mailto:mbroda@avesis.com) or me, Dr. Sharpe at [fsharpe@avesis.com](mailto:fsharpe@avesis.com).

## **B) LIMITATIONS ON STAINLESS STEEL CROWNS.**

This new requirement has generated a lot of questions, so we want to try to address them here. Avesis has implemented a restriction of 2 stainless steel crowns for general dentists and 4 stainless steel crowns for pediatric dentists. This requirement is to assure Avesis that the teeth being treated with stainless steel crowns have lost significant structure and need a crown for strength. If your Member requires more than the 2 or 4 crowns, they can still have all the crowns performed in the same six month period.

You are able to perform the 2 crowns (for general dentists) or 4 crowns (for pediatric dentists) prior to receiving the approval. Your office will however need to submit a pre – treatment estimate for the entire case in order for payment for additional crowns (beyond the 2 or 4). This should allow your office to treat Members who present with pain or problems and need immediate treatment. Please understand that this will be one of the key issues that we will review during your office’s facility and chart review. Any office that has not submitted a pre-treatment estimate for stainless steel crowns over the initial limit will have their subsequent claims for crowns for that Member denied.

## **C) REQUIREMENTS FOR DENTAL RECORDS.**

Your dental record for each Medicaid Member should include a complete health history and updates of that history at least annually. We have seen a number of dental offices where the health histories are not renewed regularly. Please review your records and establish a requirement for routine review and recording of changes in the Member’s health history. Avesis is concerned that you, as the treating dentist, are aware of any new drugs the Member may be taking or any health problems that have arisen since your last health history.

## **D) COMPLAINTS WITH HIPAA REQUIREMENTS.**

The HIPAA requirements are intended to inform Members regarding their ability to request health records and understand the requirements that the office follows relative to record and information privacy. Please be sure that your office is updating the HIPAA information and consent form with each patient at regular intervals as required by the federal statutes governing this process.

## **E) AGE LIMITS FOR FLUORIDE**

There is a typographical error in our provider manual regarding the age limit for D1203. Currently the manual indicates that the age limit for Medicaid and Peach Care for Kids is 2 – 13. This is incorrect. The age limit for CDT code D1203 under the program is **2 – 15**, and our system is set up to pay this code for members who fall within that age range.

## **F) USE OF D0240 CODE.**

Avesis has seen that some network offices are charging for an occlusal x-ray (D0240) when they are simply taking a periapical film of the upper and lower anterior teeth. An occlusal x-ray uses a special occlusal x-ray film that is larger than a periapical and covers all upper or lower teeth for a Member’s primary dentition. Please be sure that if your office is charging for a D0240 that you are using an occlusal film and that it is intended to be diagnostic for the entire upper or lower arch

## **G) LABELING OF SUBMITTED X-RAYS.**

There is a continuing issue with radiographs submitted for prior approvals or claims where the x-ray is not labeled. For original periapicals we can determine which side is which from the bubble on the film, however for panoramic films and duplicates there is no way to determine the correct side. Please mark each radiograph clearly with the Member's first and last name, the date of the xray, and indicate right or left on panoramic xrays or the tooth number on periapical films to avoid confusion or return of the claim without payment.

## **H) IMPROVEMENTS ON THE AVESIS WEB SITE**

Avesis' website at [www.avesis.com](http://www.avesis.com) now accepts electronic attachments. You can attach either written documents or x-rays to your claims sent through our site. Please see the enclosed summary of how to use the Avesis' web site for additional information about our website enhancements.

Please note that you can still send via FastAttach™, a National Electronic Attachment, LLC (NEA) company, for Pre-Estimate/Prior Approval requests requiring these documents. For more information contact FastAttach™ at: [www.fast.nea.com](http://www.fast.nea.com) or NEA at: (800) 782-5150.

## **I) NPI**

Please remember that although the effective date of May 23, 2007 was changed, you are still required to obtain an NPI (National Practitioner Identifier) for you and all dental associates in your practice. Avesis will be unable to accept electronic transactions from providers who have failed to submit their NPI numbers to us. NPI is a unique identification number for health care providers that will be used by all health plans mandated by HIPAA. You may apply for an NPI number by going to the following link on the internet: <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/StaticForward.do?forward=static.npistart>

Thank you for taking the time to review all of these issues. These are the latest changes for the Avesis Medicaid program in Georgia. If you have any questions about these changes, please contact our Customer Service unit at 1-800-231-0979.

Sincerely,



Fred L Sharpe, DDS  
Chief Dental Officer  
Avesis Dental Plans