



Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
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Issue: Professional Services Fluoride Varnish Program Policy

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a child's first dental visit occur as soon as the first tooth erupts, which is usually between six (6) and twelve (12) months of age. Early examination, intervention, guidance and referral can prevent future costly and painful dental diseases, including dental caries (cavities). Although dental caries are the most common chronic disease of children, it is almost completely preventable.

Fluoride varnish is a concentrated, thin material that is applied directly to the teeth to assist in preventing and potentially reversing very early decay that already has begun to develop. The American Dental Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend fluoride varnish application at least twice per year for infants and children starting at the age of six months.

The intent of providing these services in the physician's office is to improve the overall health of Louisiana children while potentially decreasing future cost of untreated dental diseases in this population. Providers eligible for reimbursement for these services include physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

In order to qualify for reimbursement, physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants must review the **Smiles for Life Caries Risk Assessment, Fluoride Varnish, and Counseling Module** and successfully pass the post assessment, at the link provided: www.smilesforlifeoralhealth.org

Course No. 6: [Caries Risk assessment, Fluoride Varnish & Counseling](#)

Providers shall maintain a copy of the successfully completed post assessment certificate in their files for review, if requested by the Department of Health and Hospitals or its fiscal intermediary. Approved delegated applicators of varnish must also complete and pass the training module and their certificates shall be retained on file locally as evidence of training.

The only disciplines that may apply the fluoride varnish are appropriate dental providers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. Physicians must maintain documentation in the employee records indicating competency for staff who are involved in this process.

Fluoride Varnish Application Reimbursement

CPT code:	99188	Application of topical fluoride varnish
ICDM -10 code:	Z41.8	Need for fluoride varnish application

Fluoride varnish application is limited to eligible recipients from ages 6 months through 5 years. Services are limited to once every six months. This Current Procedure Terminology (CPT) code represents application of the fluoride varnish, as well as performance of an oral health assessment, education of parents and anticipatory guidance. These services are considered inclusive and are not separately reimbursable.

CPT code 99188 is only reimbursable when performed on the same date of service as an office visit or preventive screening visit, and should be billed simultaneously with the visit. Providers shall not require recipients to return to the office to receive the varnish application.

Reimbursable fluoride varnish services for Federally Qualified Health Centers/Rural Health Clinics are included in the all-inclusive encounter. Therefore, separate encounters for these services are not allowed and the delivery of fluoride varnish services alone does not constitute an encounter visit.