

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL, REGULATIONS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
55 FARMINGTON AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06105-3725

██████████ 2016
Signature Confirmation

Client ID # ██████████
Request # 739827

NOTICE OF DECISION

PARTY

██████████
Re: ██████████
██████████
██████████
██████████

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

On ██████████ 2015, BeneCare Dental Plans (“BeneCare”) sent ██████████ (the “Appellant”) a notice of action (“NOA”) denying a request for prior authorization of orthodontic treatment for ██████████ her minor child, indicating that the severity of ██████████ malocclusion did not meet the medical necessity requirement to approve the proposed treatment.

On ██████████ 2015, the Appellant requested an administrative hearing to contest the Department’s denial of prior authorization to complete orthodontia.

On ██████████ 2015, the Office of Legal Counsel, Regulations, and Administrative Hearings (“OLCRAH”) issued a Notice scheduling the administrative hearing for ██████████
██████████ 2016

On ██████████ 2016, at the Appellant’s request, the hearing was rescheduled for ██████████ 2016.

On ██████████ 2016, in accordance with sections 17b-60, 17b-61 and 4-176e to 4-189, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes, OLCRAH held an administrative hearing.

The following individuals were present at the hearing:

██████████ Appellant
Natali Wittlmer, translator, ITI translates

Karina Reninger, BeneCare's representative
Dr. Susan Lieb, BeneCare's Dental Consultant, via telephone
James Hinckley, Hearing Officer

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

The issue is whether BeneCare's denial of prior authorization for [REDACTED] orthodontic services as not medically necessary was in accordance with state statute and regulations.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Appellant is the mother of the minor child, [REDACTED] (Hearing Record)
2. [REDACTED] is 11 years old (D.O.B. [REDACTED] 2004) and is a participant in the Medicaid program, as administered by the Department of Social Services (the "Department"). (Hearing Record)
3. BeneCare is the Department's contractor for reviewing dental providers' requests for prior authorization of orthodontic treatment. (Hearing Record)
4. Jeffrey Drayer, D.D.S. is [REDACTED] treating orthodontist (the "treating orthodontist"). (Ex. 1: Prior Authorization Claim Form)
5. On [REDACTED] 2015, the treating orthodontist requested prior authorization to complete comprehensive orthodontic services for [REDACTED] (Summary, Ex. 1)
6. On [REDACTED] 2015, BeneCare received from the treating orthodontist a *Preliminary Handicapping Malocclusion Assessment Record* with a score of 9 points, dental models, photographs and panoramic x-ray films of [REDACTED] mouth. The treating orthodontist noted the presence of severe deviations affecting the mouth and underlying structures and commented that [REDACTED] has a severely impacted mandibular canine tooth. (Ex. 2: Preliminary Handicapping Malocclusion Assessment Record)
7. On [REDACTED] 2015, Robert Gange, D.D.S., a BeneCare orthodontic dental consultant, independently reviewed [REDACTED] models and panoramic radiographs, and arrived at a score of 13 points on a completed *Preliminary Handicapping Malocclusion Assessment Record*. Dr. Gange did not note the presence of severe deviations affecting the mouth and underlying structures. (Ex. 3: Preliminary Handicapping Malocclusion Assessment Record)
8. On [REDACTED] 2015, BeneCare denied the treating orthodontist's request for prior authorization to complete orthodontic services for the reasons that the

scoring of [REDACTED] mouth was less than the 26 points required for coverage; and there was no additional substantial information about the presence of severe deviations affecting the mouth and underlying structures that if left untreated would cause irreversible damage to the teeth and underlying structures, or evidence that a diagnostic evaluation has been done by a licensed child psychologist or a licensed child psychiatrist indicating that the dental condition was related to a severe mental health condition and that orthodontic treatment would significantly improve the mental health problems. (Ex. 4: Notice of Action for Denied Services)

9. On [REDACTED] 2015, the Department received the Appellant's request for an administrative hearing. (Ex. 5: Appeal and Administrative Hearing request form)
10. On [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 2015, Geoffrey Drawbridge, D.D.S., another BeneCare orthodontic dental consultant, conducted an appeal review of [REDACTED] models, panoramic radiographs and photographs and arrived at a score of 7 points on a completed *Preliminary Handicapping Malocclusion Assessment Record*. Dr. Drawbridge made a finding that there was no presence of severe deviations affecting the mouth and underlying structures and commented, "The impaction of #22 is a surgical problem beyond the scope of orthodontic treatment". (Ex. 7: Preliminary Handicapping Malocclusion Assessment Record)
11. On [REDACTED] 2015, BeneCare notified the Appellant that an appeal review had been conducted determining orthodontic treatment is not medically necessary for [REDACTED] (Ex. 8: Appeal Review Decision Letter)
12. An impacted tooth is a tooth that cannot erupt. (Dr. Lieb's testimony)
13. [REDACTED] has a deeply impacted lower canine tooth that will never erupt on its own. (Dr. Lieb's testimony, Record)
14. Impaction of canine teeth is not an uncommon problem; such impacted teeth do not necessarily affect overall dental health and function, and one treatment option is to simply allow the tooth to remain where it is for a lifetime. (Dr. Lieb's testimony)
15. More aggressive treatment of the impacted tooth would be intervention by an oral surgeon to either surgically expose or extract the tooth. (Dr. Lieb's testimony)
16. The Appellant consulted with an oral surgeon who proposed that oral surgery could be done on [REDACTED] but the Appellant decided not to authorize the surgery without giving more thought to the matter. (Appellant's testimony)
17. [REDACTED] impacted tooth is not a severe deviation affecting the mouth and underlying structures because there is no evidence that the condition is causing functional problems; if the Appellant decides to treat the condition, treatment by

an oral surgeon, rather than orthodontic treatment, is indicated. (Dr. Lieb's testimony)

18. There is no evidence that [REDACTED] has ever been diagnosed by a psychiatrist or psychologist with any mental disorder classified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association (the "DSM"). (Record)

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Connecticut General Statutes §17b-262 provides that the Department may make such regulations as are necessary to administer the medical assistance program.
2. Connecticut Agencies Regulations §17-134d-35(a) provides that orthodontic services provided for individuals less than 21 years of age will be paid for when provided by a qualified dentist and deemed medically necessary as described in these regulations.
3. Connecticut General Statutes §17b-259b provides (a) For purposes of the administration of the medical assistance programs by the Department of Social Services, "medically necessary" and "medical necessity" mean those health services required to prevent, identify, diagnose, treat, rehabilitate or ameliorate an individual's medical condition, including mental illness, or its effects, in order to attain or maintain the individual's achievable health and independent functioning provided such services are: (1) Consistent with generally-accepted standards of medical practice that are defined as standards that are based on (A) credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature that is generally recognized by the relevant medical community, (B) recommendations of a physician-specialty society, (C) the views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas, and (D) any other relevant factors; (2) clinically appropriate in terms of type, frequency, timing, site, extent and duration and considered effective for the individual's illness, injury or disease; (3) not primarily for the convenience of the individual, the individual's health care provider or other health care providers; (4) not more costly than an alternative service or sequence of services at least as likely to produce equivalent therapeutic or diagnostic results as to the diagnosis or treatment of the individual's illness, injury or disease; and (5) based on an assessment of the individual and his or her medical condition.
4. Connecticut Agencies Regulations §17-134d-35(f) provides that the study models submitted for prior authorization must clearly show the occlusal deviations and support the total point score of the preliminary assessment.
5. Public Act 15-5 (June Sp. Session, section 390) provides that the Department of Social Services shall cover orthodontic services for a Medicaid recipient under twenty-one years of age when the Salzmann Handicapping Malocclusion Index

indicates a correctly scored assessment for the recipient of twenty-six points or greater, subject to prior authorization requirements. If a recipient's score on the Salzmann Handicapping Malocclusion Index is less than twenty-six points, the Department of Social Services shall consider additional substantive information when determining the need for orthodontic services, including (1) documentation of the presence of other severe deviations affecting the oral facial structures; and (2) the presence of severe mental, emotional or behavioral problems or disturbances, as defined in the most current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association, that affects the individual's daily functioning.

6. Connecticut Agencies Regulations §17-134d-35(e)(1) provides in relevant part that other deviations shall be considered to be severe if, left untreated, they would cause irreversible damage to the teeth and underlying structures.
7. ██████ study models submitted for prior authorization did not show the occlusal deviations necessary to support a score of 26 points or greater on the preliminary assessment.
8. BeneCare was correct to find that ██████ malocclusion did not meet the criteria for severity, or 26 points, as established in state statute.
9. ██████ study models and panoramic radiographs submitted for prior authorization did not show severe deviations affecting the oral facial structures.
10. ██████ has not been diagnosed by a child psychologist or child psychiatrist with a severe condition defined in the DSM which would be significantly helped by orthodontic treatment.
11. BeneCare was correct to find that there is no substantive information regarding the presence of severe deviations affecting the oral facial structures, or regarding the presence of severe mental, emotional or behavioral problems or disturbances, which must be considered in determining the need for orthodontic services for ██████
12. BeneCare was correct to deny prior authorization because ██████ did not meet the medical necessity criteria for orthodontic services, in accordance with state statute and regulations.

DISCUSSION

The treating orthodontist requested prior authorization for comprehensive orthodontic treatment for ██████ despite a low score on the malocclusion assessment, based on his assertion that a severely impacted canine tooth represents a severe deviation of ██████ mouth.

The Department normally considers orthodontic treatment medically necessary when a properly scored malocclusion assessment results in a score of 26 points or greater, because that degree of malocclusion would be expected to significantly interfere with dental health and function. In [REDACTED] case, three orthodontists who evaluated his mouth arrived at scores of 9 points, 13 points, and 7 points, indicating that [REDACTED] teeth are not severely maloccluded.

When the total score on the assessment is less than 26 points the Department also considers whether orthodontic services are needed because of the presence of severe deviations affecting the oral facial structures. A severe deviation must be one that affects the oral facial structures, and one that, if left untreated, would cause irreversible damage to the teeth and underlying structures.

[REDACTED] has an abnormal dental condition, a canine tooth that is impacted and will never erupt into the dental arch on its own, but there is no evidence that the condition is severe, or that it adversely affects [REDACTED] dental function, or that the condition will cause any permanent and irreversible damage to [REDACTED] teeth and mouth. Rather, Dr. Lieb testified, the condition may be relatively benign and safely ignored. Or, if the Appellant chooses to seek more aggressive treatment, the treatment would need to be performed by an oral surgeon. Orthodontic treatment is not medically necessary for [REDACTED] because orthodontia would have no effect on [REDACTED] impacted tooth, and because the rest of his teeth are not severely maloccluded and do not require comprehensive orthodontic treatment.

DECISION

The Appellant's appeal is **DENIED**.



James Hinckley
Hearing Officer

cc: Diane D'Ambrosio, Connecticut Dental Health Partnership
Rita LaRosa, Connecticut Dental Health Partnership

RIGHT TO REQUEST RECONSIDERATION

The appellant has the right to file a written reconsideration request within **15** days of the mailing date of the decision on the grounds there was an error of fact or law, new evidence has been discovered or other good cause exists. If the request for reconsideration is granted, the appellant will be notified within 25 days of the request date. No response within **25** days means that the request for reconsideration has been denied. The right to request a reconsideration is based on §4-181a(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Reconsideration requests should include specific grounds for the request: for example, indicate what error of fact or law, what new evidence, or what other good cause exists.

Reconsideration requests should be sent to: Department of Social Services, Director, Office of Legal Counsel, Regulations, and Administrative Hearings, 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

The appellant has the right to appeal this decision to Superior Court within 45 days of the mailing of this decision, or 45 days after the agency denies a petition for reconsideration of this decision, provided that the petition for reconsideration was filed timely with the Department. The right to appeal is based on §4-183 of the Connecticut General Statutes. To appeal, a petition must be filed at Superior Court. A copy of the petition must be served upon the Office of the Attorney General, 55 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106 or the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105. A copy of the petition must also be served on all parties to the hearing.

The **45** day appeal period may be extended in certain instances if there is good cause. The extension request must be filed with the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services in writing no later than **90** days from the mailing of the decision. Good cause circumstances are evaluated by the Commissioner or his designee in accordance with §17b-61 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Agency's decision to grant an extension is final and is not subject to review or appeal.

The appeal should be filed with the clerk of the Superior Court in the Judicial District of New Britain or the Judicial District in which the appellant resides.