

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

██████████, 2021
Signature confirmation

Case: ██████████
Client: ██████████
Request: 169862

NOTICE OF DECISION

PARTY

██████████
██████████

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

On ██████████ 2020, the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership (“CTDHP”), the Department of Social Services’ contractor and medical reviewer, issued ██████████ (the “Appellant”) a *Notice of Action* denying prior authorization of orthodontic services for ██████████ (the “child”), his minor child.

On ██████████, 2020, the Office of Legal Counsel, Regulations, and Administrative Hearings (“OLCRAH”) received the Appellant’s hearing request, postmarked ██████████ 2020.

On ██████████ 2021, the OLCRAH issued a notice to the Appellant scheduling an administrative hearing for ██████████ 2021. The OLCRAH granted the Appellant’s request for a postponement.

On ██████████ 2021, in accordance with sections 17b-60, 17b-61 and 4-176e to 4-189, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes, the OLCRAH held an administrative hearing. The following individuals participated by telephone-conferencing:

██████████, Appellant
Rosario Monteza, CTDHP Representative
Benson Monastersky, D.M.D., CTDHP Witness
Eva Tar, Hearing Officer

The hearing record closed ██████████ 2021.

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

The issue is whether CTDHP's denial of prior authorization for the child's orthodontic services is supported by state statute and regulation.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The child's date of birth is [REDACTED]. (Appellant Testimony)
2. The child has dental coverage through HUSKY Health. (CTDHP Exhibit 4)
3. The child has low self-esteem, feels anxious, and is concerned about her smile. (CTDHP Exhibit 5) (Hearing request)
4. Since [REDACTED], 2020, the child has been receiving therapy from a therapist who is credentialed as a licensed professional counselor and a national certified counselor; this therapist is not credentialed as a child psychologist or child psychiatrist. (CTDHP Exhibit 5) (Hearing request)
5. The child has a diagnosis of [REDACTED]. (CTDHP Exhibit 5) (Hearing request)
6. As of the date of this hearing, the child had not been evaluated by a psychiatrist or a psychologist. (Appellant Testimony)
7. CTDHP received a request from [REDACTED] for prior authorization for the child's orthodontic services. (CTDHP Exhibit 1)
8. On [REDACTED] 2020, [REDACTED] (the "treating orthodontist") completed a *Preliminary Handicapping and Malocclusion Assessment Record* scoring the severity of the malocclusion of the child's teeth as 21 points; he noted that the child had a prognathic mandible and identified four missing teeth. (CTDHP Exhibit 2)
9. A prognathic mandible is a term for when the jaw juts forward. (CTDHP Witness Testimony)
10. In the child's case, the prognathic mandible is not adversely affecting the child's teeth, as she does not demonstrate a crossbite. (CTDHP Witness Testimony)
11. The child's missing teeth #4, #13, #20, and #29 contribute to her score on the *Preliminary Handicapping and Malocclusion Assessment Record*. (CTDHP Exhibits 1, 2, 3, and 6)
12. Benson Monastersky, D.M.D. (the "first dental reviewer"/CTDHP Witness) and Robert Gange, D.D.S. (the "second dental reviewer") are CTDHP dental consultants. (CTDHP Exhibits 3 and 7)
13. The first and second dental reviewers scored the severity of the child's malocclusion to equal 25 points and 24 points, respectively. (CTDHP Exhibits 3 and 7)

14. On [REDACTED] 2020 and [REDACTED] 2021, CTDHP denied the treating orthodontist's request for prior authorization of the child's orthodontic services. (CTDHP Exhibits 4 and 7)
15. Connecticut General Statutes § 17b-61 (a), as amended in the 2020 Supplement to the General Statutes of Connecticut, *revised to January 1, 2020*, provides: "The Commissioner of Social Services or the commissioner's designated hearing officer shall ordinarily render a final decision not later than ninety days after the date the commissioner receives a request for a fair hearing pursuant to section 17b-60, ... , provided the time for rendering a final decision shall be extended whenever the aggrieved person requests or agrees to an extension...."

On [REDACTED] 2020, the OLCRAH received the Appellant's [REDACTED] 2020 postmarked hearing request. The OLCRAH granted the Appellant a 23-day postponement of his [REDACTED] 2021 hearing date, which further extended the deadline for the issuance of this decision by 23 days. This hearing decision would have become due by [REDACTED] 2021. This final decision is timely.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Section 17b-2 of the Connecticut General Statutes in part designates the Department of Social Services as the state agency to administer the Medicaid program pursuant to Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

"The Commissioner of Social Services may make such regulations as are necessary to administer the medical assistance program...." Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-262.

2. "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...." Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-282e.

The Appellant did not establish that the severity of his child's malocclusion met or exceeded a score of 26 points on an objectively scored *Preliminary Handicapping Malocclusion Assessment Record*.

3. Section 17b-282e of the Connecticut General Statutes provides:
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....
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-282e.

Section 17-134d-35 (e)(2) of the Regulations of Connecticut Agencies provides:

If the total score is less than [twenty-six (26)] points the Department shall consider additional information of a substantial nature about the presence of severe mental, emotional, and/or behavior problems, disturbances or dysfunctions, as defined in the most current edition of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, and which may be caused by the recipient's daily functioning. *The department will only consider cases where a diagnostic evaluation has been performed by a licensed psychiatrist or a licensed psychologist who has accordingly limited his or her practice to child psychiatry or child psychology.* The evaluation must clearly and substantially document how the dentofacial deformity is related to the child's mental, emotional, and/or behavior problems. And that orthodontic treatment is necessary and, in this case, will significantly ameliorate the problems.

Regs., Conn. State Agencies § 17-134d-35 (e)(2). (emphasis added).

The child's circumstances do not meet the criteria at Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-282e and Conn. Agencies Regs. § 17-134d-35 (e)(2) to permit authorization of orthodontic services as the Appellant did not submit a diagnostic evaluation—performed by a licensed psychiatrist or a licensed psychologist who has accordingly limited his or her practice to child psychiatry or child psychology—that clearly and substantially documents how the child's dentofacial deformity is related to the child's mental, emotional, and/or behavior problems and provides the opinion that orthodontic treatment is necessary and will significantly ameliorate the problems.

4. "Orthodontic services will be paid for when (1) provided by a qualified dentist; and (2) deemed medically necessary as described in these regulations." Conn. Agencies Regs. §17-134d-35 (a).

Section 17b-259b (a) of the Connecticut General Statutes provides:

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.

Conn. Gen. Stat. §17b-259b (a).

The Appellant did not demonstrate that orthodontic services to treat the child's malocclusion are medically necessary, as the term "medically necessary" is defined at Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-259b (a).

CTDHP's denial of prior authorization for the child's orthodontic services is supported by state statute and regulation.

DECISION

The Appellant's appeal is DENIED.

Eva Tar-electronic signature
Eva Tar
Hearing Officer

Cc: Magdalena Carter, CTDHP
Rita LaRosa, CTDHP

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 Administrative Hearings and Appeals, 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, 165 Capitol Avenue, 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 the Commissioner's 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.