



AAPD 2021 LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

ACCESS TO OPERATING ROOMS FOR PEDIATRIC DENTISTS

REQUEST:

- ***Please contact the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and ask that the agency move forward this year to ensure dental rehabilitative services can be provided to children and the frail elderly. CMS needs to do two things: set up a new billing code for use by hospitals, and propose in the CY 2022 HOPPS rule (expected out in July 2021) that the code also be covered for use by ambulatory surgery centers.***

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

There is an urgent need for dental rehabilitative services for children, disabled, and frail elderly patients that has been exacerbated by the COVID public health emergency and related hospital backlogs. At this time there is no suitable billing mechanism to address and provide these types of dental surgical procedures to Medicare or Medicaid beneficiaries.

These complex dental surgeries could be performed in either hospital outpatient centers or ambulatory surgical centers if CMS were to establish an appropriate billing code/mechanism under Medicare (given most state Medicaid programs utilize Medicare billing codes).

Below is a clinical example of the type of case that need to be treated in the operation room under general anesthesia, a four year-old with entire primary dentition affected:



AAPD, ADA and AAOMS are in discussions with CMS about establishing a new dental rehabilitation code that would allow hospitals and ASCs to work with dentists to provide these services for children and the frail elderly in hospital outpatient and ambulatory surgical settings.

In spite of advances in preventive care and reduction in untreated tooth decay, thousands of children under five years of age, many adults with special needs and disabilities, and the frail elderly disproportionately suffer from significant dental decay (dental caries). If not treated through dental surgical intervention, this disease can result in emergency department visits and life-threatening infection and hospital admission. Given the time involved for restorative dental surgical procedures, the often-complex equipment and anesthesia required, and the complexity of the services required for high-risk patients, dentists need to provide these services in a hospital or ambulatory surgery center (ASC) operating room to ensure safe, quality care.

Dental rehabilitation means achieving the clinical goal of restoring good oral health:

