Criteria Requirements and Exceptions for General Anesthesia (GA) and Intravenous (IV) Sedation relative to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In alignment with recommended safety procedures and protocols from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) during the COVID-19 statewide shelter-in-place order, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) asks that Medi-Cal dental providers follow the CDC’s guidance and postpone elective procedures, surgeries, and non-urgent dental visits, and prioritize urgent and emergency visits. Providers can review the American Dental Association (ADA) guidelines in determining the need for urgent or emergency dental care. To alleviate administrative burden during this time, DHCS reminds providers of the exceptions allowed for IV Sedation/GA prior authorization when providing emergency dental services.

Prior Authorization (PA) Exception for IV Sedation and GA
PA can be waived when IV Sedation/GA, as outlined in the Provider Bulletin Volume 31, Number 21, is medically necessary.

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to treat an emergency medical condition. An “emergency medical condition” is defined in Title 22, Division 3, Subdivision 1, Chapter 3, Article 2, Section 51056 (b) of the California Code of Regulations as:

A medical condition (including emergency labor and delivery) manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity, including severe pain, such that the absence of immediate medical attention could reasonably be expected to result in any of the following:

1. Placing the patient’s health in serious jeopardy.
2. Serious impairment to bodily functions.
3. Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.

To waive PA, providers should submit claims with the following information:

- A justification of medical necessity of the IV Sedation/GA
- Pre-operative radiographs and/or photographs documenting the emergency. In addition, the claim should include all the required pre-operative radiographs and/or photographs (as needed) for the billed procedures on the claim.

The below flowchart, which is also in Provider Bulletin Volume 31, Number 21, was developed to aid and ensure that Medi-Cal dental providers are submitting appropriate documentation to justify medical necessity of the IV Sedation/GA. Each case requiring IV Sedation/GA is unique and should be evaluated as such. Although standard forms may be used to document the medical necessity for IV Sedation/GA, it is imperative that Medi-Cal dental providers submit additional documentation that is specific to the case. If a dental treatment plan is available, it should be included with the justification for the IV Sedation/GA.

For more questions about this bulletin, please call the Telephone Service Center at (800) 423-0507.
When a provider determines that a beneficiary meets one of the criteria of 3-6, it is not automatically considered to be documentation that conscious sedation or IV sedation was not feasible; rather the submitted documentation of the criteria that was met must be clearly stated in the patient’s records and the submitted documentation requesting GA must clearly demonstrate the need for this covered benefit.

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Dental Treatment Plan

Diagnostic / Preventive

Most diagnostic and preventive treatment can be rendered without IV Sedation/GA unless the patient is so uncooperative that even a dental examination cannot be completed without sedation.

Restorative

It is critical for the patient to be immobilized either through effective communicative techniques or physical restraints. Medical condition and/or cognitive maturity of the beneficiary can seriously impact the safe delivery of this treatment.

Surgical

Treatment can be lengthy based on the type of surgery. It is critical for the patient to be able to tolerate the length of the surgery as well as be immobilized either through effective communicative techniques or physical restraints. Medical condition and/or cognitive maturity of the beneficiary can seriously impact the safe delivery of this treatment.

Extensive dental treatment is not defined by the number of procedures rendered but the treatment that can be reasonably tolerated and rendered in a safe and humane fashion based on cognitive maturity and medical condition of the beneficiary. April 2017