

December 8, 2022

Cheryl J. Roberts, J.D.
Director, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services
600 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Director Roberts,
It was nice to see you at our last DAC meeting. Congratulations on your new role with DMAS.

I'm writing this letter out of concerns arising from our last DAC meeting. Many dentists are complaining about letters being sent to patients with a denial for a crown on a tooth that has had a root canal. The letters state that the root canal fill was not sufficient. I talked to Dr. Hairston about a work around, but it would require extra documentation by the dentist. The VDA cannot support this policy.

After the discussion at the DAC, it's incumbent on the VDA to register our opposition to this practice within the Medicaid program. The language was modified, but it still implies that the dentist performing the root canal is at fault.

We recommend that the ORM language be changed. Research shows that the radiographic apex is not always the correct location for the root canal to end. Dentists use apex locators that are accurate. Under the section criteria it states, "Fill should be sufficiently close to the radiological apex to ensure that an apical seal is achieved, unless there is a curvature or calcification of the canal that limits the dentist's ability to fill the canal to the apex." Striking this language from the ORM would address the problem.

We have also received numerous complaints about the recredentialing process. Dentists are receiving a 15-page packet that they are required to print and fill out by hand. It's our understanding that this is due to a DMAS requirement and that, in other states in which DentaQuest administers dental Medicaid, they either use the CAQH or their online form and can scan in the signature pages, saving time for providers and the administrators. The ADA also offers a certification program that many dentists use when recredentialing with other commercial insurance companies. This is a DMAS policy change that would alleviate administrative burdens for dentists participating in Medicaid.

Addressing issues like these are critical to keeping dentists in the program and to allowing us to recruit more dentists to serve this population.

Thank you very much for your attention to our concerns. I look forward to working with you to resolve these issues.

Sincerely,



Cynthia M. Southern, D.D.S.
President

CC: Cheryl Harris Sutton, East Regional Vice President for Client Engagement, DentaQuest; Daniel Plain, DMAS Division of Healthcare Services Director; Justin Gist, DMAS Dental Program Manager; The Honorable John Littel, Secretary of Health and Human Resources