

- **Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment**
 - **EPSDT**

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment is a federally mandated Medicaid program for children from birth to 21 years of age who qualify for Medicaid. In 1967, Congress established EPSDT to ensure that children were closely monitored to prevent health and disability conditions from occurring or worsening AND to provide services to address such conditions.

The 1999 Medicaid *Primer* produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services which is referenced on the inside cover of this Guide states, "In 1989, Congress strengthened the (EPSDT) mandate by requiring States to cover all treatment services, regardless of whether or not those services are covered in the State's Medicaid plan. The EPSDT component now covers the broadest possible array of Medicaid services, including personal care and other services provided in the home."

Early and periodic screening schedules are determined by DMAS through consultation with medical organizations involved in child health care. These schedules indicate the required minimal frequency of screening services and can be found on the DMAS web site, www.dmas.virginia.gov. Screening includes all of the following services:

- √ Comprehensive health and developmental history
- √ Comprehensive unclothed physical exam
- √ Appropriate immunizations
- √ Lab testing such as lead toxicity screening
- √ Dental, vision and hearing screenings
- √ Other screenings as determined to be needed by a provider
- √ Health education is a required component of screening services.

If there is a concern identified during the screening, the screener must immediately make a referral for a complete diagnostic evaluation. Screening and diagnosis could occur with the same provider.

Treatment must be made available to "correct or ameliorate defects and physical and mental illnesses or conditions discovered by the screening services" (Title XIX of the Social Security Act.) The list of required services is not exhaustive and includes all services listed in the federal Medicaid program. Some examples of EPSDT treatment services are dental care, eyeglasses, hearing aids, skilled nursing, personal care services, and therapies. Other services that are needed to correct, treat or maintain the child's disability, health problem or medical condition must be provided.

EPSDT is underutilized. EPSDT must be provided to all children who are eligible for Medicaid. EPSDT can be particularly important to children who are on the waiting list for the Developmental Disabilities Waiver or the Mental Retardation Waiver. Receiving services such as skilled nursing or personal care may be needed while the child is waiting for access to the Waiver. Young adults with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 21 often are eligible for Medicaid when they become eligible for SSI. These young adults could especially benefit from EPSDT.

You may find yourself having to educate providers about EPSDT. The DMAS contact number for EPSDT 804-225-3124. Information is also available from the National Health Law Program at www.healthlaw.org.