

Noteworthy Stories

- Increasing Access to Dental Care in Rural Communities in the DMV
- Don't Miss Out on Our Next Dental Webinar

Did You Know?

- Tips for Submitting Dental Claims
- Coming Soon: Interactive Voice Response System Upgrade

Working With CareFirst

- Recredentialing Reminder
- Manage Remittance Advice, Electronic NOPs and Claim Status Online
- Holiday Closings

Clinical Corner

- Current Trends Innovating Dental Care
- The Importance of Fluoride for Patients Under Age 14

BlueLink

- Medical Provider Newsletter

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Noteworthy Stories

Increasing Access to Dental Care in Rural Communities in the DMV

Oral health is a vital part of overall well-being, but many Americans—especially in rural areas of the D.C./MD/VA (DMV)—struggle to access routine dental care. Factors like dental provider shortages, limited insurance acceptance and affordability are major barriers. These challenges are often compounded by social drivers of health, such as transportation difficulties, lower income and limited education about preventive care. Poor oral health affects not only physical health but also employment, economic stability and social connectedness.

Recognizing this, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield and CareFirst BlueChoice, Inc. (CareFirst) is working to expand access by investing in network improvement, integrating equitable dental care resources and promoting solutions that address both clinical needs and social factors.

We invite dental providers to use the health equity courses available at our Learning and Engagement Center to better understand the social factors affecting local communities. If your office is already involved, please make sure your practice information is current so CareFirst members can easily find you.

Back to top

Don’t Miss Out on Our Next Dental Webinar

CareFirst is hosting a dental webinar on **November 5, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.** You can register your office by clicking here.

- When you click the link, a registration form will appear. Fill out all fields and submit your registration.
- When the registration is submitted, you’ll receive an auto-generated confirmation email from noreply@teams.registration.microsoft.com.
- Save your confirmation email: It will include a link you’ll need to join the webinar.

In Case You Missed It

We held a dental webinar on Thursday, May 7 and uploaded the recording to our Learning and Engagement Center. Watch it here.

We Want Your Feedback

We encourage your office to share your feedback regarding your availability for webinars and to suggest topics or areas of interest you’d like us to cover in future sessions. Your input will help us ensure that the content is relevant and engaging. Access the survey.

Back to top

Did You Know?

Tips for Submitting Dental Claims

Submitting complete, accurate claims helps reduce delays, prevents avoidable denials and supports timely payment. Below are ten practical tips to help your office streamline dental claim submission and improve tracking from start to finish.

1. **Submit electronically whenever possible.** Electronic submission is typically faster, more secure and easier to track. It also supports streamlined payments through Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA) and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).
2. **Use paper claims only when necessary.** Paper submissions are more likely to be delayed. If you must submit paper claims, be sure all fields are complete and legible.
3. **Include all required claim information.** Incomplete claims are a leading cause of delays and rejections.
4. **Always include both National Provider Identifiers (NPIs).** Include the billing NPI (organization) and the rendering NPI (treating dentist/provider) to help avoid denials.
5. **Verify the member ID and 3-letter prefix.** Missing or incorrect member information can stop a claim from processing.
6. **Keep provider information up to date.** Updating roster and address details helps prevent processing errors and misrouted payments.
7. **Use the correct claim form.** Use the ADA claim form for dental services and CMS-1500 when billing dental services under a medical benefit.
8. **Use the correct codes and include required diagnoses.** Use accurate Current Dental Terminology (CDT) codes and include an ICD-10 diagnosis when required.
9. **Submit attachments electronically when needed.** Use clearinghouse tools (such as NEA FastAttach™) to send supporting documentation quickly and securely.
10. **Label corrected claims clearly and track submissions.** Mark resubmissions as “Corrected Claim,” and consider a clearinghouse for error reporting and claim tracking.

Quick takeaway: A few extra minutes reviewing claim details before submission can help reduce follow-up requests and keep payments moving. If you need help locating claim tools or resources, log in to CareFirst Direct or connect with your CareFirst support contact.

Back to top

Coming Soon: Interactive Voice Response System Upgrade

We’re pleased to let you know that we will be upgrading our Provider Services Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system in late September 2026 to improve access to information and support. New features will include:

- Enhanced call routing to help connect you more quickly to the right resource

- Streamlined menu options for easier navigation
- Improved self-service capabilities for faster access to common information
- Better system performance and reliability
- Updated functionality for a smoother provider experience

We're committed to making this transition as seamless as possible and will share additional details as the implementation date approaches.

Back to top

Working With CareFirst

Recredentialing Reminder

Correct provider and practice information is essential to doing business with CareFirst. In March's issue of BlueImpressions, we included a reminder to participate in recredentialing, as it is necessary for your network participation.

CareFirst follows an established three-year schedule for recredentialing to remain compliant with state regulations and accrediting bodies. In addition, the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) and multiple state laws require all provider directories to have accurate information.

To keep your dental provider information up to date, we recommend that you register with Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH) ProView. When you update your information with CAQH, it will also be updated in CareFirst's systems and provider directories. New practitioners can complete an application for access to the CAQH portal through their secure website at www.caqh.org/providers.

If you have completed the CAQH application through another CAQH member health plan, be sure that you've verified your data within the last 120 days and authorized CareFirst to access your information. Then, complete the CAQH Data Sheet, including your CAQH ID, and email it to us.

For questions, contact the Dental Provider Networks and Credentialing Team at 443-921-0676 or dentalcontracting@carefirst.com.

Back to top

Manage Remittance Advice, Electronic NOPs and Claim Status Online

CareFirst Direct, the CareFirst Provider Portal, offers providers convenient online access to Remittance, also known as Notices of Payment (NOPs) or Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA 835s). Using the portal, you can manage NOP downloads, check claim status and handle other administrative tasks any time, day or night, 24/7.

NOPs on CareFirst Direct

- **Location:** Navigate to the "Remittance/NOP" tab within CareFirst Direct to start viewing your payment notices.
- **Capabilities:** Providers can search for specific remittances, access detailed claim information and review batch payment data, making it easier to stay organized and informed.
- **Access requirements:** For HIPAA purposes, this function is available with granted Office Administrator (OAA) access. Check to make sure you've been granted access to view NOPs and fee schedules. If you don't have access, please contact your Office Administrator or submit a request through the portal.

Steps to Request OAA Access

- Have the practice owner/CEO or primary provider send an email to ProviderCFDAccess@carefirst.com and request the **Online Access Admin Designation Form.**
- The form must be completed in its entirety and match the information that was used to register and create your profile for the CareFirst Direct Provider Portal.
- The form must be signed by the practice owner/CEO or primary provider and returned to: ProviderCFDAccess@carefirst.com.
- Once access is granted, you can use the step-by-step tutorials available on the Learning and Engagement Center should you need assistance.

Back to top

Holiday Closings

CareFirst, CareFirst BlueChoice and The Dental Network will be closed on the following dates:

- Friday, July 3—Independence Day (Observed)
- Monday, September 7—Labor Day
- Wednesday, November 11—Veterans Day
- Thursday, November 26—Thanksgiving Day
- Friday, November 27—Day after Thanksgiving
- Friday, December 25—Christmas Day

You should expect to see higher-than-normal wait times the day after a holiday. We encourage you to use our self-service tools—CareFirst Direct and CareFirst On Call—for claims status, eligibility and benefits information.

Back to top

Clinical Corner

Current Trends Innovating Dental Care

Did you know scientists are discovering new ways to grow permanent teeth? There could be a time in this generation when we'll replace missing teeth with brand new natural teeth. By creating changes to the USAG-1 protein in our own bodies, new teeth—complete with crown, root and pulp—have been grown in the lab, as well as in mice and ferrets. Projections for human trials could be as early as 2030.

Science has already created an artificial saliva using a sugar cane protein that can act as a shield to protect teeth from cavities. These advances not only lead to better oral health systems but also link to various systemic conditions that are affected by our own mouths. Newer studies are considering the viral and bacterial effects of oral pathogens in diabetes, cardiac health, pregnancy, breast cancer, Alzheimer's and many others. When your mouth smiles, your body smiles too!

Back to top

The Importance of Fluoride for Patients Under Age 14

Fluoride remains one of the most effective, evidence-based tools for preventing tooth decay, especially in children and adolescents. For patients under the age of 14, consistent exposure to fluoride plays a critical role in strengthening developing teeth and supporting long-term oral health. As children grow, their teeth are still forming and are more susceptible to cavities. Fluoride works by reinforcing tooth enamel, making it more resistant to acid attacks from plaque, bacteria and sugars. This added protection is particularly important for younger patients who may still be building consistent oral hygiene habits.

Incorporating fluoride into routine dental care helps reduce the risk of decay at an early stage, often preventing the need for more complex and costly treatment later. Topical fluoride applications (D1206, D1208) provided during regular visits offer an added layer of protection for patients who may be at a higher risk. Education is also a key component of prevention. Encouraging parents and caregivers to use age-appropriate fluoride toothpaste and reinforcing proper brushing habits can significantly improve oral health outcomes. Addressing common questions about fluoride safety and use can help build confidence and support adherence at home.

Tooth decay remains one of the most common chronic conditions among children—but it is largely preventable. By incorporating fluoride into a child's oral health routine, providers can help promote stronger teeth, reduce cavity risk and support healthier outcomes for the patients they serve.

Back to top

BlueLink

Medical Provider Newsletter

Check out our BlueLink medical newsletter, published every two months on our Provider website. From the newsletter page, select *BlueLink* from the menu on the left to display links to the publications.

Back to top