Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment
• Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) is a program for members who are 20 years old and younger. It covers any medically necessary service to treat any physical, dental, or mental health diagnosis that is covered under the member’s Health First Colorado (Colorado’s Medicaid Program) benefits. Services may even be covered if it’s not a Health First Colorado benefit or has service limits.

• Goes beyond the scope of the adult Health First Colorado benefit package.

• Designed to enhance primary care with emphasis on prevention and early intervention, including both physical and mental health issues.
EPSDT

• Medical necessity for EPSDT services means a program, good, or service that:
  o Will, or is reasonably expected to, prevent, diagnose, cure, correct, reduce, or ameliorate the pain and suffering, or the physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental effects of an illness, condition, injury, or disability.
    • This may include a course of treatment that includes mere observation or no treatment at all.
  o Is provided in accordance with generally accepted professional standards for health care in the United States.
  o Is clinically appropriate in terms of type frequency, extent, site, and duration.
Medical necessity for EPSDT services means a program, good, or service that:

- Is not primarily for the economic benefit of the member, caretaker, or provider.
- Is delivered in the most appropriate setting(s) required by the member’s condition.
- Provides a safe environment or situation for the member.
- Is not experimental or investigational.
- Is not more costly than other equally effective treatment options.
EPSDT Screenings

Examples of What is Included

• Well visits for members up to the age of 20 years old
• Developmental evaluations
• Behavioral evaluations and therapies
• Immunizations
• Lab tests, including lead poisoning tests
• Health and education preventative education
• Vision services
• Dental services
• Hearing services
EPSDT

• Under EPSDT, children who have Health First Colorado are entitled to evaluation and treatment of mental health issues. The EPSDT program facilitates mental health care by means of the comprehensive health screening, performed by the child's primary care provider (PCP).

• When the PCP identifies a member who is in need of behavioral health care, the member should be referred to the appropriate behavioral health organization (BHO) for services.
• Some of these services are covered under the physical health fee-for-service benefit, often through primary care (reimbursed through fee-for-service), and some of these services are covered under the capitated behavioral health benefit. In addition, some of these services are covered under the state plan. State plan services include:
  o Individual psychotherapy
  o Group psychotherapy
  o Family psychotherapy
  o Inpatient hospitalization

• There are many ways to get these services covered. It is necessary to know what bucket they fall into.
• The following behavioral health services are reimbursed through the capitated behavioral health benefit under the EPSDT program:
  • Vocational services
  • Intensive case management
  • Prevention/early intervention activities
  • Clubhouse and drop-in centers
  • Residential treatment (authorization required)
  • Assertive community treatment
  • Recovery services
  • Respite services (authorization required)
• Our contracted network providers are required to screen and assess a member’s treatment needs (even those not covered by the capitated behavioral health benefit) and provide the clinically appropriate services discovered by any screening or diagnostic procedure. Most EPSDT services do not require prior authorization. Residential treatment and respite services are the exception and do require prior authorization.
Covered Diagnosis

• If the diagnosis is a “covered diagnosis” included in the list of covered diagnoses provided by the capitated behavioral health plan, then the services are billed to us, and no prior authorization is required, except for residential treatment and respite services.

• If the diagnosis is not a “covered diagnosis,” the claim will be denied and an authorization will be required. This process then occurs through the Colorado prior authorization request (PAR) process.

• The denial information, as well as any other results of testing and diagnostic assessment, is necessary documentation in order to receive the authorization.
• Any EPSDT service is subject to medical record review to assure the following minimum requirements:
  o Any request for mental/behavioral health screening or assessment must be accommodated. Any provider unable to complete a requested screening or assessment must contact us for assistance.
  o Any screenings and services must be performed by a provider qualified to provide mental health services according to the staff requirements in the Uniform Service Coding Standards Manual for the relevant service.
• Any EPSDT service is subject to medical record review to assure the following minimum requirements:
  o All screenings and services must be performed in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner.
  o Results of all screenings must be recorded in the member’s medical record.
  o Referrals to the member’s primary care provider, Colorado Access, Healthy Communities, or other referral as appropriate for services not available at the provider’s office.
• BHO providers are required to accept referrals for children and adolescents screened through the EPSDT program, and to coordinate services with the child's PCP.

• As part of an initial mental health assessment, the behavioral health clinician should attempt to determine whether a child or adolescent has received a comprehensive EPSDT health screening.
  o If so, the provider should obtain a release of information from the parent or guardian to obtain and review the results of EPSDT screening, and coordinate medical and behavioral health care.
  o If not, the provider should attempt to refer the member to a PCP to perform an EPSDT screening.
• Our provider network is expected to facilitate and promote the availability of EPSDT services, both behavioral health and physical health in nature. This includes (but is not limited to) the following:
  o Regular communication and coordination between the behavioral health clinician and the member’s primary care provider (with a member’s permission and release of information).
  o Informing and educating members and their families about the services available to them.
    • A family-friendly ESPDT fact sheet can be found [here](#).
Our provider network is expected to facilitate and promote the availability of EPSDT services, both behavioral health and physical health in nature. This includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Inquiring about utilization of these benefits (e.g., “with your birthday coming up, have you scheduled your annual checkup?” or “have you gotten your flu shot yet this year?”).
- Attending an EPSDT webinar and reviewing ESPDT materials provided by the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing available [here](#).
Care coordination services are available to any member or provider to assist with any EPSDT coordination needed including (but not limited to):

- Locating a provider and/or needed services.
- Referral assistance for treatment not covered by the capitated behavioral health benefit but found to be needed as a result of conditions disclosed during the screening and diagnosis.
- Assistance with transportation.
- Assistance with scheduling appointments for services if requested by the member/family.
- Resolving barriers or problems related to the EPSDT benefit, including (but not limited to) participation in any creative solutions meetings.
Care coordination services are available to any member or provider to assist with any EPSDT coordination needed including (but not limited to):

- Resolving barriers or problems related to the EPSDT benefit.
- Referral and utilization of state health agencies, including, but not limited to:
  - Vocational rehabilitation
  - Maternal and child health
  - Public health, mental health, and education programs
  - Head Start
  - Social services programs
  - Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental food program
• Any member or provider who needs assistance accessing ESPDT services, or is experiencing barriers or problems related to EPSDT services (even physical health services not reimbursed by us) can contact care management at 720-744-5124 or toll free at 866-833-5717.

• The Healthy Communities family health connectors can also assist with accessing services.
  o In Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, and Elbert counties, contact the Tri-County District Health Department at 303-873-4404.
  o In Denver county, contact Denver Health and Hospital Authority at 303-602-6770.
• For more information about EPSDT, [click here](#). The website includes valuable information and resources such as fact sheets and training videos for both parents and providers, request forms, and regulatory information.