

# Denti-Cal Bulletin



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## **POLICY CLARIFICATION ON DENTI-CAL SERVICES AND ASSOCIATED DENTAL MATERIALS**

The Medi-Cal Dental Program (Denti-Cal) wants all Denti-Cal providers to understand the important distinction between a patient's entitlement to a medically necessary covered dental service and your professional judgment of which dental material is used to provide that service.

The following clinical examples may assist in understanding this distinction:

*Case 1:* Patient "R" presents to your office fully edentulous. You find complete maxillary and mandibular dentures to be medically necessary. Patient "R" demands that you place porcelain teeth. While the denture itself is a benefit of the Denti-Cal Program, the choice of denture tooth material is at the sole discretion of the dentist.

*Case 2:* Patient "C" presents to your office with a failing MO amalgam on tooth #30. You determine that a new restoration is medically necessary. Patient "C" does not want any "mercury" fillings in his mouth and demands a composite be used. You have two choices:

- 1) Under the law (Assembly Bill 999), a dentist may provide a dental restorative material other than the covered benefit of amalgam. If you elect to do so, then the restoration can be legally billed to Denti-Cal using the appropriate amalgam procedure code. Payment, however, will be at the Schedule of Maximum Allowances' (SMA) fee for amalgam.
- 2) You can inform the patient that, in your professional judgment, amalgam is the most suitable dental material for the restoration of tooth #30. Patient "C" may decide to accept your choice of dental material or Patient "C" may decide to seek treatment with another dentist.

In general, a Denti-Cal beneficiary is entitled to covered services that are medically necessary. The choice of dental material used to provide a specific service lies within the scope of the professional judgment of the dentist.

Please remember: you may not bill beneficiaries for the difference between the Denti-Cal fee for an amalgam filling and your usual, customary, and reasonable (UCR) fee for a composite filling.

For additional information, please call the Denti-Cal Telephone Service Center at (800) 423-0507, or visit the Denti-Cal Web site (<http://www.denti-cal.ca.gov>).