



COVID-19 Billing FAQ for PPE

Background: The cost of infection control procedures has greatly increased and our dental offices are facing a significant financial impact. Additionally, the price of personal protective equipment (PPE) including N95 masks, surgical masks, face shields, and gowns has increased due to supply shortages. As a result, we are implementing a PPE fee to help cover some of the costs associated with the new requirements.

1. Can the PPE fee be waived or can we provide a professional allowance?

No, the fee should not be waived. The recent changes for PPE requirements represent a significant cost to your office and the organization. While safety and infection control have always been a priority, it is important that we are able to recoup some of these additional costs. However, for treatment plans created prior to June 1, providers do have discretion to waive fees.

2. What if my provider doesn't want to charge the PPE fee to patients?

The fee must be charged. Again, it is important to each office and the organization that we charge this fee to offset some of the additional costs associated with patient care as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. If a patient does not end up receiving any services, will they still be charged the PPE fee? For example, the patient arrives to the office but for some reason we are unable to provide them with care.

No, they would not be charged the PPE fee. Patients who receive at least one procedure will incur the PPE fee.

4. What if a patient refuses to pay?

The PPE fee will be charged to their account the same as any other procedure.

5. Are we going to send a patient to collections if they do not pay this fee?

Most patients will understand the need for elevated safety and infection control as a result of COVID-19. We don't anticipate many patients refusing to pay the fee. In fact, we've had patients who returned for care since our reopening who have expressed appreciation for what they have experienced in the practice because of our noticeable efforts to keep them safe and informed. That said, all unpaid services are subject to collections.

6. Will we include information about the PPE fee in our email and text communications to patients?

We have included information about the PPE fee on our COVID-19 pre-screening survey. Additionally, the fee is noted in the COVID-19 patient FAQ that is linked on each office web page. The fee notice is also included on our COVID-19 consent form.

7. When multiple family members all come in together for their appointments, will they each pay a PPE fee? For example, if a family of three is seen, will each family member be charged separately?

Yes, because the use of PPE is associated with an individual patient encounter it will be necessary for each patient to be assessed the fee regardless of when they come in or who they come in with.

8. Are we charging for multiple visit procedures such as deliveries, inserts, seats, and ortho?

Yes, the PPE fee is per visit as long as a procedure is performed at the visit that requires the need for PPE to be used. Doctors have discretion for charging the PPE fee if multiple visits are required.

9. How long will we be charging the fee?

We anticipate continuing to charge this fee while we are operating in an elevated PPE environment. We will update as that changes.

10. For Wisconsin offices, didn't Delta Dental of Wisconsin already provide us with funds to cover the increased requirements of PPE?

We have a strong partnership with Delta Dental of Wisconsin. They generously created the Practice Recovery Supplement Program (PRSP) to help our dental practices offset some costs as we initially prepared to resume providing routine care to Delta Dental of Wisconsin members. Now that we are reopened and are providing care, we will continue to incur additional PPE costs with each visit. The fund was a one-time program that does not cover any ongoing costs.

11. How will the fee be charged for members of the Essential Smile Plan?

Essential Smile Plan members are subject to the same PPE fee that other patients are assessed.

12. The code in DV says PPE provider RDH. Do we also use this code for DDS services?

Yes, use the code PPE provider RDH for all visits.

13. Will employees need to pay the fee?

No, the fee is waived for employees. Our dental coverage is self-insured and we have made the choice to pay the fee for employees.