



24-4321

**DATE:** February 6, 2024 (Item No. 26)

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Daniel Little, Director, Social Services Agency

**SUBJECT:** Update on Strategies Relating to Timely Medical and Dental Examinations

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Receive report from the Social Services Agency, Department of Family and Children's Services, relating to timely medical and dental examinations for children in the County's child welfare system.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no fiscal implications associated with receiving this report.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND**

On August 24, 2023, the Children, Seniors, and Families Committee (CSFC) received a report from the County of Santa Clara (County), Social Services Agency's (SSA) Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) related to a quarterly update on strategies relating to timely medical and dental examinations (Item No. 12). This report provides an update on efforts towards ensuring all children in out-of-home placement receive required timely medical and dental examinations.

This report was originally scheduled for presentation to the Children, Seniors, and Families Committee in December, however on December 12, 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved the removal of all DFCS items from CSFC.

### **Timeliness of Medical and Dental Exams**

Children in out-of-home care must receive timely and appropriate medical and dental care and are required to have exams during specific age periods. The timeliness of exams is determined by the American Association of Pediatrics Bright Futures Periodicity Schedule. Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations section 6847(c) defines when a medical or dental exam is considered overdue: "Persons eligible for periodic health assessments will receive one assessment during each age period [...and...] will be considered overdue for an assessment on the first day he or she enters a new age period without assessment being performed in the previous age period." Therefore, children, youth, and non-minor dependents (NMD) in the County's care must receive at least one health assessment (or equivalent) within the age periods listed in the Bright Futures Periodicity Schedule.

Medical and dental exams are a service available to every child in DFCS' care to provide timely health assessments and as such, are required to be offered to NMDs. A NMD is a person who is over the age of 18 and receiving services through DFCS. However, NMDs have reached the age of majority and therefore have all the legal decision-making authority as any other adult, including privacy regarding their healthcare records. While youth 18 or older are entitled to receive medical care with the frequency provided by the periodicity schedule, they must consent and agree to receive dental and healthcare treatment and services. DFCS cannot require NMDs to receive services at a particular frequency and they have the right to refuse an annual exam. Additionally, even if a NMD consents to services, they have a right to privacy and are not required to turn in documentation of completed exams to DFCS.

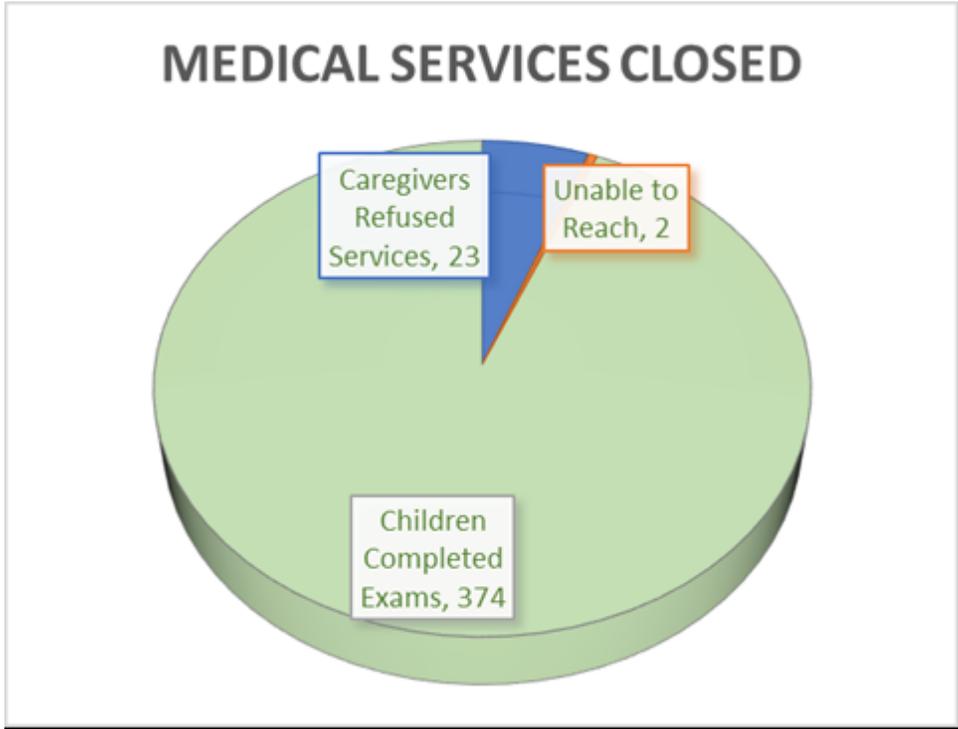
Further, Welfare and Institutions Code 16501.3 specifically states that public health nurses may only support NMDs "...At the request of and under the direction of a non-minor dependent, as described in subdivision (v) of Section 11400, assisting the non-minor dependent in accessing physical health and mental health care, coordinating the delivery of health and mental health care services, advocating for the health and mental health care that meets the needs of the non-minor dependent, assisting the non-minor dependent to make informed decisions about his or her health care by, at a minimum, providing educational materials, and assisting the non-minor dependent to assume responsibility for his or her ongoing physical and mental health care management."

#### Appointment Management Services Program

DFCS continues to partner with the Healthier Kids Foundation (HKF) on the Appointment Management Services Program (AMSP), which assists caregivers with scheduling and tracking medical and dental appointments and ensures that children referred to AMSP have a medical and dental home established for ongoing care. Caregivers receive assistance with scheduling appointments and reminders for the appointments via text message.

Implemented in November 2020, AMSP has received 1,009 referrals through September 30, 2023 for upcoming exams for children under 18 years of age residing with caregivers in Santa Clara County. Of the referrals, 454 were for medical well-being exams while 555 were for dental exams.

HKF continues to coordinate medical services for 24 children while 399 referrals were closed, as shown below. Of the referrals closed, 93.7% were due to successful completion of exams. There were 31 children who were no longer required to have a medical well-being exam, as a result of exiting the dependency system.



HKF continues to coordinate dental services for 37 children while 451 referrals were closed, as shown below. Of the referrals closed, 93.8% were due to the successful completion of exams. There were 67 children who were no longer required to have a dental well-being exam, as a result of exiting the dependency system.



HKF continues to partner with the Supporting Protecting and Respecting Kids (SPARK) Clinic. HKF reports the best availability in scheduling appointments for children is with SPARK Clinic but other community clinics are available and prioritize appointments for foster youth to ensure compliance.

DFCS continue to work with HKF on the expansion of their services in Fiscal Year 2024 to

ensure all caregivers, even those with children placed outside of Santa Clara County, receive timely reminders of upcoming exams. Further, the contract expansion will include HKF providing reminders to NMD youth to ensure they understand the timelines for their healthcare. A contract amendment is in the process of finalization and DFCS continues working with HKF to prepare text scripts for messages to be sent to NMDs once the contract expansion is approved.

### Foster Youth Compliance Data

The data shows that 469 foster youth were required to have medical and dental exams during September 2023. Of those youth, 200 were missing dental exams, of which 102 or 51%, were 18 or older. Further, there were 119 youth missing medical exams, of which 74 or 62.2%, were 18 or older.

As of September 30, 2023, point-in-time data shows that 352 children ages 0-17 in out-of-home placement were required to have medical and dental well-being exams. Of these, 45 missed medical exams, representing 12.7% of the total children 0-17, and 98 children missed dental exams, representing 27.8% of the total.

The data shows that dental exams continue to be more challenging for NMDs. DFCS is exploring the feasibility of a program to educate NMDs about the value of addressing their oral health needs. Further exploration is planned with the County's Health and Hospital System and Public Health Department staff in December 2023 and DFCS will provide an update in the March.

DFCS continues to work with the Public Health Department and the Local Oral Health Collaborative. A provider's meeting was scheduled but only Valley Dental attended. A discussion about incentives to encourage dental exams began but will be explored more fully in individual provider meetings to better accommodate scheduling conflicts. In the meantime, a social media campaign started in November. A stand-alone statistic about missed appointments, launched on November 16, 2023, on Facebook, Instagram, and X (Formerly Twitter), and a short slide presentation (see attached) will be posted the first week of December on Facebook and Instagram. The goal of the campaign is to emphasize need for timely dental treatments and educate providers about the role trauma plays at the dental office. The audience for the campaign includes caregivers and dental providers with messaging that foster youth may be impacted by previous traumas and deserve special consideration while at the dentist. The campaign will urge more caregivers to schedule dental treatments for foster youth and to alert dental providers of the disparity in dental treatment for foster youth. Hashtags: #scclhph, #fosteryouth, #traumainformedcare

### Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care

The public health nurses (PHN) in the Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care (HCPCFC) provide health care consultation and guidance to case workers as well as caregivers to address the health needs of foster children. PHNs also assist caregivers with finding specialty providers but do not assist with scheduling well-being exams that HKF supports in Santa Clara County.

The PHNs and manager who support HCPCFC have fully returned to their assignment to

serve foster youth and all positions are filled and no staff are on leave. There was a reduction of funding from the state for HCPCFC which led to a reduction of two PHNs assigned to the program. Currently, there are six PHNs and a PHN manager assigned to work with foster youth in HCPCFC. While there are increased caseloads for the remaining PHNs, the actual caseloads are still lower than the statewide standard. DFCS continues to meet monthly with the HCPCFC team to stay on track with children's care coordination needs.

### **CHILD IMPACT**

The recommended action will have a positive impact on the **Healthy Lifestyle** indicator by ensuring that children in the child welfare system receive timely medical and dental examinations.

### **SENIOR IMPACT**

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

The report will not be received.

### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The Clerk of the Board will follow the usual process for this type of legislative file.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Foster Youth Dental Social Medical
- Timely Medical Dental Presentation