

From Developmental and Behavioral Health Committee

Bright Futures Updates EPSDT Guidelines!

The American Academy of Pediatrics updated its Bright Futures Periodicity schedule for preventative health in November 2021. The updates include guidance for general health care (hepatitis B risk and sudden cardiac death risk assessments), dental care (fluoride varnish and supplementation) and behavioral health care (screening for suicide risk during depression screening and conducting behavioral/social/emotional screening).

The shift to formal behavioral/social/emotional screening represents a substantial move forward. The prior schedule activities provided little specific guidance and risked failing to identify and address the emotional and behavioral needs of children. Suicide risk identification and reduction continues to be critical to the health and well-being of children and youth. The American Academy of Pediatrics has championed the pediatrician's role in this work.

Both behavioral health initiatives align with efforts to address the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Crisis identified by the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

The updated behavioral/social/emotional screening and depression/suicide guidelines include all children, but they are especially critical for children who have experienced trauma and adverse experiences. Children with these exposures are at higher risk for emotional and behavioral issues and may also experience involvement with child protective services and foster care. For these reasons, identifying and addressing emotional and behavioral needs and engaging in team-based care and safety planning is particularly important.

This new guidance offers suggestions to incorporate standardized and normed screening tools into routine clinical practice, including references to professional organization guidelines, tools for practices to identify their readiness for practice change and guidelines for CPT coding to maximize reimbursement for screening services.

Over the next several months Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will update the Medicaid Provider Manual to reflect these changes. MIAAP looks forward to engaging with MDHHS and its members to implement these updated guidelines.