

Office of Medicaid BOARD OF HEARINGS

Appellant Name and Address:



Appeal Decision:	Denied	Appeal Number:	2177760
Decision Date:	12/08/2021	Hearing Date:	11/15/2021
Hearing Officer:	Marc Tonaszuck		

Appearance for Appellant:



Appearance for MassHealth:
Dr. Carl Perlmutter, DentaQuest

Interpreter:



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Office of Medicaid
Board of Hearings
100 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02171*

APPEAL DECISION

Appeal Decision:	Denied	Issue:	Orthodontics
Decision Date:	12/08/2021	Hearing Date:	11/15/2021
MassHealth's Rep.:	Dr. Carl Perlmutter, DentaQuest	Appellant's Rep.:	██████████
Hearing Location:	Quincy Harbor South		

Authority

This hearing was conducted pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 118E, Chapter 30A, and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder.

Jurisdiction

Through a notice dated 09/14/2021, MassHealth denied the appellant's request for prior authorization of comprehensive orthodontic treatment (see 130 CMR 420.431 and Exhibit 4). The appellant filed this appeal in a timely manner on 10/08/2021 (see 130 CMR 610.015(B) and Exhibit 2)¹. Denial of a request for prior approval is a valid basis for appeal (see 130 CMR 610.032).

¹ In MassHealth Eligibility Operations Memo (EOM) 20-09 dated April 7, 2020, MassHealth states the following:

- Regarding Fair Hearings during the COVID-19 outbreak national emergency, and through the end of month in which such national emergency period ends:
 - All appeal hearings will be telephonic; and
 - Individuals will have up to 120 days, instead of the standard 30 days, to request a fair hearing for member eligibility-related concerns.

Action Taken by MassHealth

MassHealth denied the appellant's request for prior authorization of comprehensive orthodontic treatment.

Issue

The appeal issue is whether MassHealth was correct, pursuant to 130 CMR 420.431(C), in determining that the appellant is ineligible for comprehensive orthodontic treatment.

Summary of Evidence

The appellant is a minor MassHealth member whose father appeared at hearing via telephone. MassHealth was represented at hearing by Dr. Carl Perlmutter, an orthodontic consultant from DentaQuest, the MassHealth dental contractor.

The appellant's provider submitted a prior authorization request for comprehensive orthodontic treatment, including photographs and X-rays on 09/13/2021. As required, the provider completed the MassHealth Handicapping Labio-Lingual Deviations ("HLD") Form, which requires a total score of 22 or higher for approval or that the appellant has one of the conditions that warrant automatic approval of comprehensive orthodontic treatment. The provider indicated that the appellant has a condition which is an automatic qualifying condition, specifically, he has severe maxillary anterior crowding of at least 8 mm. The treating orthodontist did not find any other of the conditions that warrant automatic approval of comprehensive orthodontic treatment. The provider also did not provide an HLD Index score.

When DentaQuest evaluated this prior authorization request on behalf of MassHealth, its orthodontists determined that the appellant had an HLD score of 17. The DentaQuest HLD Form reflects the following scores:

Conditions Observed	Raw Score	Multiplier	Weighted Score
Overjet in mm	3	1	3
Overbite in mm	4	1	4
Mandibular Protrusion in mm	0	5	0
Open Bite in mm	0	4	0
Ectopic Eruption (# of teeth, excluding third molars)	0	3	0
Anterior Crowding	Maxilla: 5 Mandible: 0	Flat score of 5 for each	5
Labio-Lingual Spread, in mm (anterior	5	1	5

spacing)			
Posterior Unilateral Crossbite	0	Flat score of 4	0
Posterior Impactions or congenitally missing posterior teeth (excluding 3 rd molars)	0	3	0
Total HLD Score			17

DentaQuest did not find an automatic qualifying condition. Because it found an HLD score below the threshold of 22 and no autoqualifier, MassHealth denied the appellant's prior authorization request on 09/14/2021.

At hearing, Dr. Perlmutter testified that he agreed with the HLD Index score calculated by DentaQuest. Further he testified that the appellant has crowding in the maxillary anterior region; however, his measurements were 6-7 mm. Because the appellant does not have at least 8 mm or maxillary anterior crowding, he does not meet the criteria for that or any other automatic qualifying condition. Dr. Perlmutter concluded that without a score of at least 22, an auto-qualifier or other evidence of medical necessity, MassHealth cannot approve comprehensive orthodontic treatment in this case.

The appellant's mother testified telephonically with the assistance of her daughter who served as a Spanish language interpreter. She stated she had nothing to say and that she would wait until the appellant grew up a little to bring him back to the orthodontist for a re-evaluation.

Findings of Fact

Based on a preponderance of the evidence, I find the following:

1. On 09/13/2021, the appellant's orthodontic provider submitted a prior authorization request for comprehensive orthodontic treatment to MassHealth (Exhibit 4).
2. The provider completed a Handicapping Labio-Lingual Deviations Form for the appellant. He did indicate that the appellant has severe maxillary anterior crowding of at least 8 mm., which is an automatic qualifying condition (Exhibit 4).
4. The provider did not include a medical necessity narrative with the prior authorization request (Exhibit 4).
5. When DentaQuest evaluated the prior authorization request on behalf of MassHealth, its orthodontists determined that the appellant had an HLD score of 17, with no automatic qualifying condition (Exhibit 4).

6. MassHealth approves requests for comprehensive orthodontic treatment when the member has an HLD score of 22 or more (Testimony).
7. On 09/14/2021, MassHealth notified the appellant that the prior authorization request had been denied (Exhibits 1 and 4).
8. On 10/08/2021, the appellant filed a timely appeal of the denial (Exhibit 2).
9. At hearing on 11/15/2021, a MassHealth orthodontic consultant reviewed the provider's paperwork, photographs, and X-rays and found an HLD score of 17 (Testimony).
10. The appellant's HLD score is below 22.
11. The appellant has maxillary anterior crowding of 6-7 mm.
12. The appellant does not have any of the conditions that warrant automatic approval of comprehensive orthodontic treatment (cleft palate, severe maxillary anterior crowding greater than 8 mm, deep impinging overbite, anterior impaction, severe traumatic deviation, overjet greater than 9 mm, or reverse overjet greater than 3.5 mm).

Analysis and Conclusions of Law

130 CMR 420.431(C) states, in relevant part, as follows:

The MassHealth agency pays for comprehensive orthodontic treatment, subject to prior authorization, once per member per lifetime under the age of 21 and only when the member has a handicapping malocclusion. The MassHealth agency determines whether a malocclusion is handicapping based on the clinical standards for medical necessity as described in Appendix D of the Dental Manual.

Appendix D of the Dental Manual is the "Handicapping Labio-Lingual Deviations Form" (HLD), which is described as a quantitative, objective method for measuring malocclusion. The HLD index provides a single score, based on a series of measurements that represent the degree to which a case deviates from normal alignment and occlusion. MassHealth has determined that a score of 22 or higher signifies a severe and handicapping malocclusion. MassHealth will also approve a prior authorization request, without regard for the HLD numerical score, if there is evidence of a cleft palate, deep impinging overbite, anterior impaction, severe traumatic deviation, overjet greater than 9 mm, reverse overjet greater than 3.5 mm, or severe maxillary anterior crowding, greater than 8 mm.

The appellant's provider found severe maxillary anterior crowding of at least 8 mm., which is an automatic qualifying condition. He did not otherwise provide measurements and a corresponding HLD Index score. After reviewing the provider's submission, MassHealth found an HLD score of 17 and no automatic qualifying condition. Upon review of the prior authorization documents, at hearing a different orthodontic consultant found an HLD score of 17 and no automatic qualifying condition.

The main difference between the appellant's provider's score and that of Dr. Perlmutter's is the scoring for the automatic qualifying condition of severe maxillary anterior crowding. The appellant's orthodontist checked off that the crowding is at least 8 mm. At the fair hearing, Dr. Perlmutter measured 6-7 mm. of maxillary anterior crowding. His score is supported by the photographs. Dr. Perlmutter, a licensed orthodontist, demonstrated a familiarity with the HLD Index. His measurements are credible and his determination of the overall HLD score is consistent with the evidence. Moreover, he was available to be questioned by the hearing officer and cross-examined by the appellant's representative.

The appellant's mother provided no substantive testimony to challenge MassHealth's measurements. Accordingly, MassHealth's measurements and corresponding HLD score is supported by the regulations and the appellant has no automatic qualifying condition or an HLD Index score of 22. As the appellant does not qualify for comprehensive orthodontic treatment under the HLD guidelines, MassHealth was correct in determining that he does not have a severe and handicapping malocclusion. Accordingly, this appeal is denied.

Order for MassHealth

None.

Notification of Your Right to Appeal to Court

If you disagree with this decision, you have the right to appeal to Court in accordance with Chapter 30A of the Massachusetts General Laws. To appeal, you must file a complaint with the Superior Court for the county where you reside, or Suffolk County Superior Court, within 30 days of your receipt of this decision.

Marc Tonaszuck
Hearing Officer
Board of Hearings

cc:
MassHealth Representative: DentaQuest 1, MA

