

Office of Medicaid BOARD OF HEARINGS

Appellant Name and Address:



Appeal Decision:	Denied	Appeal Number:	2206882
Decision Date:	11/1/2022	Hearing Date:	10/19/2022
Hearing Officer:	Thomas J. Goode		

Appearance for Appellant:
Mother

Appearance for MassHealth:
Dr. Carl Perlmutter, DMD



*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:	11/1/2022	Hearing Date:	10/19/2022
MassHealth's Rep.:	Dr. Carl Perlmutter	Appellant's Rep.:	Mother
Hearing Location:	Remote	Interpreter:	Language Line

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 August 28, 2022, MassHealth denied Appellant's request for prior authorization of comprehensive orthodontic treatment (130 CMR 420.431 and Exhibit 1). Appellant filed this appeal in a timely manner on September 12, 2022 (130 CMR 610.015; Exhibit 2). Denial of a request for prior authorization is valid grounds for appeal (130 CMR 610.032).

Action Taken by MassHealth

MassHealth denied 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, in denying Appellant's prior authorization request for comprehensive orthodontic services.

Summary of Evidence

MassHealth was represented at hearing by Dr. Carl Perlmutter, an orthodontic consultant from DentaQuest, which is the MassHealth dental contractor. Dr. Perlmutter testified that he is a licensed orthodontist with many years of clinical experience. Appellant's orthodontic provider

submitted a prior authorization request for comprehensive orthodontic treatment with X-rays and photographs. Appellant's orthodontic provider completed the Handicapping Labio-Lingual Deviations (HLD) Form which requires a total score of 22 or higher for approval and recorded a score of 9 points (Exhibit 1, p. 12). Appellant's orthodontic provider's HLD Form does not record any autoqualifiers and excludes a medical necessity narrative (*Id.*, p. 13). Dr. Perlmutter testified that a DentaQuest reviewing orthodontist completed HLD measurements based on photographs and X-rays and arrived at a score of 15 points (*Id.*, p. 6). Dr. Perlmutter testified that he carefully reviewed and measured the photographs and X-rays and calculated a score of 9 points. As the HLD scoring submitted by Appellant's orthodontist, DentaQuest and Dr. Perlmutter agree that there are fewer than 22 points with no autoqualifiers or medical necessity narrative included with the request, the prior authorization request was denied.

Appellant was represented by her mother who stated that she feels Appellant needs braces because she has space between her front teeth. She added that Appellant complained to her dentist that she has pain when she chews, and the dentist referred her to an orthodontist for braces.

Findings of Fact

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

1. Appellant's orthodontic provider submitted a prior authorization request for comprehensive orthodontic treatment with X-rays and photographs.
2. Appellant's orthodontic provider completed the Handicapping Labio-Lingual Deviations (HLD) Form which requires a total score of 22 or higher for approval and recorded a score of 9 points
3. Appellant's orthodontic provider's HLD Form does not record any autoqualifiers and excludes a medical necessity narrative.
4. A DentaQuest reviewing orthodontist and Dr. Perlmutter completed HLD measurements based on photographs and X-rays and arrived at scores of 15 points and 9 points respectively.

Analysis and Conclusions of Law

Regulation 130 CMR 420.431(C)(3) states in relevant part:

The MassHealth agency pays for comprehensive orthodontic treatment only once per member under age 21 per lifetime and only when the member has a handicapping malocclusion. The MassHealth agency determines whether a malocclusion is handicapping based on the clinical standards 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 represents the degree to which a case deviates from normal alignment and occlusion. MassHealth has determined that a score of 22 or higher signifies a handicapping malocclusion. Appellant’s orthodontic provider’s HLD Form does not indicate any autoqualifiers or medical necessity narrative submitted with the request and records a HLD score of 9 points. A DentaQuest reviewing orthodontist and Dr. Perlmutter scored 15 and 9 points respectively on the HLD Form. As Appellant’s HLD score is below the required 22 points and no other conditions warranting approval have been identified, the appeal must be 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.

Thomas J. Goode
Hearing Officer
Board of Hearings

cc: MassHealth Representative: DentaQuest 1, MA