**Dental Caries Risk Assessment: An Integral Approach for Early Detection and Prevention for Medicaid Recipients in New York State**

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**Introduction**

Dental caries remains a significant oral health concern in New York State, particularly among Medicaid beneficiaries. Early detection and preventive measures are crucial to reduce the burden of caries and improve oral health outcomes. Incorporating a caries risk assessment tool that identifies factors that contribute to the development of caries in routine dental practice will serve as a vital approach to determining the likelihood of developing dental caries in the future. This assessment will help provide targeted interventions to prevent, halt, or reverse the disease at the earliest opportunity.

**Aims**

This paper aims to highlight the relevance of the caries risk assessment protocol in routine dental practice. The goal, therefore, is to help inform policy and possibly support consideration for reimbursement by Medicaid in New York State.

**Method:**

A literature search was conducted using databases such as PubMed and Web of Science in order to evaluate the different caries risk assessment tools, protocols, the different strategies and approaches used by states for Medicaid reimbursements. A total of 17 articles were critically evaluated, and their key findings were summarized.

**Results and Discussion of Findings:**

Not all states reimburse dental providers for performing caries risk assessment; often leading to neglecting this crucial tool in routine dental practice, especially in private dental offices. Medicaid does not reimburse oral health care providers for providing this essential service to residents in New York State. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), only 16 states have adopted policies that allow reimbursement for caries risk assessment as a separate service [1]. Incorporating a caries risk assessment tool for each patient who visits the dental practice and providing individualized recommendations for prevention and treatment in these states have proven to reduce the incidence of dental caries considerably.

**Conclusion**

Including caries risk assessment as a mandatory reimbursable preventive service in the dental office will reduce the incidence and severity of dental caries, a common chronic disease among children and adults in New York State.

**References:**

1. Dentistry, A.A.o.P., *Caries-risk assessment and management for infants, children, and adolescents.*, in *The Reference Manual of Pediatric Dentistry.*, A.A.o.P. Dentistry, Editor. 2022: Chicago, Illinois. p. 266-72.