



Position Statement – Fluoride Varnish 2012/13 [Revised Feb.26, 2013]

## Problem

Tooth decay, a progressive disease throughout the life-cycle, is the single most common chronic childhood disease. Untreated decay can lead to pain, swelling, infection, destruction of teeth, and damage to tissue resulting in illness, difficulty eating, problems at school or work, high dental expenses for repair, and costly emergency room services.

## Intervention

Fluoride, a naturally-occurring mineral, has been found to be an easily-utilized, low-cost way of reducing the incidence and severity of tooth decay. Decay is highly preventable. Sources of fluoride include toothpaste, mouth rinse, some bottled waters, fluoride varnish, and naturally-occurring and adjusted-level community water supplies.

Fluoride varnishes, effectively used in Europe for over 30 years, are now approved in the United States. Varnish is a promising product due to its unique properties of durability and effectiveness in setting even in the presence of moisture. Varnish actively lowers caries-causing bacterial levels and repairs and strengthens teeth.

## Key Points about Fluoride Varnish

- Provides an added benefit to the use of fluoridated water and toothpaste.
- Shows demonstrated effectiveness in children from moderate to high risk of dental caries.
- Comes in child-friendly flavors and is easily tolerated by infants, toddlers and children with developmental disabilities. No specialized equipment is required for application. Recommended by the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Applies easily and uses only a small amount thus reducing the risk of inadvertent swallowing.
- Is more effective than other modes of applying topical fluoride.
- Can be applied by both dental and medical providers and thus should be reimbursed in both settings to maximize access and utilization.

## Position

The NH Oral Health Coalition membership, recognizing the long-standing evidence supporting the importance of fluoride as an effective preventive measure supports the use of fluoride varnish applied by trained medical or dental providers, as a reimbursable method of treating dental caries.

*The New Hampshire Oral Health Coalition is a state-wide diverse collaborative of organizations, agencies and individuals focusing on oral health education, prevention, access, workforce development, and advocacy aimed to promote optimal oral health for the people of New Hampshire.*