Well Child Visits

Overview
Well child visits are early periodic health screenings, where parents can talk with a health provider about their child’s development and their own parenting questions. Current literature suggests that children who receive well child visits are more prepared to start school and to optimize opportunities for healthy development as they grow.

Bright Futures and American Academy of Pediatrics recommend monthly well child visits at 6 months, 9 months, 12 months and 18 months. Once a child reaches 24 months it is recommended that they see their physician every year until they are 21. Rates of well child visits in Washington State are below the national 50th percentile. Increasing those rates is a priority in state efforts to improve population health.

There are many reasons why parents may not take their child/children in for their well child visits, from lack of transportation to language barriers. The Department of Health, Health Care Authority, Department of Early Learning and Department of Social and Health Services are working together to identify common barriers and develop strategies to overcome them.

Current Health Status
According to the 2015 National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), rates of well child visits in Washington State were below the national 50th percentile. The 75th percentile rate has been set as Washington State’s 2018 goal for children aged one to 20 years old who are on Medicaid.

As of 2016, children covered by Washington State Apple Health (Medicaid) received their well child visits at a rate of 39% to 69%. For children aged between 12 to 21 years of age the rate is 39%. The rate for children up to the age of 15 months is 68%.

In Washington State, well child care for children three to six years of age is 62% as reported by Medicaid claims is data lower than the national average which is just above 70%. This represents a missed opportunity to detect possible health concerns, and to provide information and resources to parents and caregivers that can impact health of children and families over the life span.

Identified as a priority population health issue, the Well Child Visit rate is one of the Quality Improvement Measures for Apple Health Managed Care
Well Child Visits Organizations (MCOs). MCOs receive financial incentives for meeting these measures as part of paying for value; this began in January 2017.

Well Child Visits Resources
Current Work and Initiatives
Emerging Issues
Health Equity Concerns
Key Data and Sources
Recommended Strategies

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