

Dec. 9, 2016

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**Re: Policy Related to Vision Screening in Children**

Thank you for your email on Oct. 3, 2016, regarding our current policy on vision screening in children. You recommended that instrument-based ocular screening using photo screening be allowed as a mass screening instrument for children ages 1-3 (ending on their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday). Also, you requested that “or” be substituted with “and” as follows:

- As a mass screening instrument for children ages 1- 2 3 (ending on the 3<sup>rd</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> birthday)
- For children 3 4 years and over who are developmentally delayed ~~and~~ or unable to cooperate with routine visual acuity screening

We appreciate you providing us with the Academy’s current policy statement and supporting clinical report for review. Based on that information, we have reevaluated the age limits for our coverage of instrument-based ocular screening. **Instrument-based ocular screening of children ages 1-3 (ending on the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday) will be covered at the preventive health copay (zero dollars for most plans) going forward.**

**The word “and” will be retained in the second bullet above.** As noted in the Academy’s policy statement, “Visual System Assessment in Infants, Children, and Young Adults by Pediatricians,” the use of optotype-based (traditional) acuity algorithms remains the current practice for children ages 4 and older. The policy further notes that instrument-based screening may be a helpful alternative in screening developmentally delayed children of any age.

Our current policy reflects this guidance by allowing coverage for preventive screening for children ages 1 through 3 using instrument-based screening and allowing instrument-based screening in older children with developmental delays. Failure to cooperate is a subjective finding, and we believe our policies reflect current practices.

I hope this gives you the information you need to communicate to the Academy’s members. If you have any questions, please contact your organization’s dedicated medical director, Dr. Shelley, or contact me at MPQ@uhc.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Wendy MacLeod, MD  
National Medical Director