



Children's Commission.

Jurist in Residence Letter:

For Judges Handling Child Protective Services Cases

April 21, 2017

Texas Health Steps Medical Checkup

All children entering DFPS conservatorship must receive a comprehensive, preventive health care checkup within 30 days of entering DFPS conservatorship known as the Texas Health Steps medical checkup.¹ The checkup helps identify the child's unique healthcare needs and helps DFPS make placement decisions that are in the child's best interest.

Unfortunately, a large number of children entering care do not receive a timely Texas Health Steps checkup. DFPS has set a goal that by September 1, 2017, ninety percent of children entering care are receiving this medical checkup within the first 30 days of entering DFPS conservatorship.

Q: What do judges need to know about Texas Health Steps and this requirement?

A: Judges can help ensure that children in foster care receive a timely Texas Health Steps checkup by inquiring at the Adversary and Status Hearings whether the Texas Health Steps checkup has been scheduled or whether it has occurred.

Q: What is included in the Texas Health Steps medical checkup?

A: These initial screenings should include, at a minimum:

- Family history
- Physical examinations
- Dental assessment, checkup and treatments
- Measurements (height, weight and infant head circumference)
- Mental health assessment
- Developmental and nutritional assessments
- Vision and hearing screenings
- Laboratory tests

¹ The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) service is Medicaid's comprehensive preventive child health service (medical, dental, and case management) for individuals from birth through 20 years of age. EPSDT was created by the 1967 amendments to the federal Social Security Act and defined by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989. In Texas, EPSDT is known as Texas Health Steps, which includes the preventive care components, or Early and Periodic Screening, in the total EPSDT service.

- Lead screenings
- Immunizations
- Tuberculosis test

Q: Who provides the Texas Health Steps medical checkup?

A: Texas Health Steps medical checkups must be performed by a medical provider enrolled in Medicaid as a Texas Health Steps provider and who is contracted with Star Health. Not all primary care providers are Texas Health Steps providers.

Q: Who is responsible for scheduling the Texas Health Steps checkup?

A: The child's caregiver is responsible for contacting the Texas Health Steps provider and setting up an appointment. STAR Health can help connect the caregiver with a Texas Health Steps provider in their area. DFPS is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the checkup occurs.

Q: What if caregivers have difficulty in scheduling the Texas Health Steps checkup?

A: STAR Health offers the caregiver assistance in scheduling the Texas Health Steps checkup through its Superior Member Services staff who are available 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday at 1-866-912-6283.

Q: How can I find out additional information about Texas Health Steps?

A: Visit DFPS at: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child Protection/Medical Services/guide-steps.asp>

Visit Star Health at: <https://www.fostercaretx.com/for-members/stay-healthy/texas-health-steps.html>

For general information about Texas Health Steps visit: <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/thsteps/about.shtm>



Hon. Dean Rucker

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