

State Stories for Children's Vision and Eye Health

MINNESOTA: Vision Screening Procedure Updates and Guidelines Development

Background

The Minnesota (MN) Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Health (DHCAH) unit provides a vision screening procedures manual (Manual). The Manual is used to train those who perform vision screening across the state including personnel from clinics, local public health departments, Early Childhood Screening (for children ages 3–5 and pre-K screening), Head Start, and schools. The last full expert review and revision of the Manual occurred in 2006.

Aim: To create new vision screening guidelines for schools in Minnesota based on new national recommendations drafted by the American Association of Pediatric Ophthalmologists and Strabismus (AAPOS) in May of 2014 and the National Expert Panel recommendations led by the Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health in 2015.

Leadership and Expertise: Between April 1 and June 30, 2015, the MN DHCAH gathered a panel of local experts including ophthalmologists, optometrists, an orthoptists, family practice and pediatric medical providers, Head Start screeners, and school nurses to review and update the Manual. Technical assistance was provided by the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness.

Strategies:

- **Expert Panel.** The expert group developed Manual guidelines that were eventually integrated into the current procedures. The panel made several recommended changes that were integrated into the new guidelines.
- **Training**
 - » MDH offers visual acuity screening training 10 times a year in statewide locations.
 - » Training for screeners is a four-hour program that includes both vision screening and hearing screening with opportunities for practice. MDH also offer a seven-hour training program for health professionals.
 - » MDH developed and implemented a training module

Companion to *Children's Vision and Eye Health: A Snapshot of Current National Issues, 2nd edition*, which can be accessed at <https://preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Snapshot-Report-2020condensedF.pdf>. For more information contact info@preventblindness.org

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for clinic staff and an online e-learning module for anyone who provides Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) screenings (the state's EPSDT program).

Successes:

1. Standardized Screening.

There is a focus on ensuring that children and youth in all settings are screened for visual acuity in accordance with recommendations. Additionally, an expansion of use of guidelines within clinic systems to inform staff

of policies and training in visual acuity screening.

2. **EPSDT Change.** The MN Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) program is a Medicaid health component for children. The program now references the updated guidelines under the C&TC schedule of age-related screening standards.

Find guidelines at: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childreneyouth/ctc/vision/screen/visionscrman.pdf>

