

The State of Children's Dental Health: Making Coverage Matter

Montana

F

2011 GRADE

Montana meets two of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs, one less than it met in 2010. The change in grade is due to a clarification of what state law allows dental hygienists to do. Montana hygienists may apply for a Limited Access Permit, which allows them to place dental sealants on children's teeth without a dentist's prior exam. Yet sealant programs can be conducted in only five schools; the hurdle is a state rule requiring the Board of Dentistry to individually approve each participating school or public facility.¹ In the vast majority of cases, a dentist's prior exam is required. However, a bill has been introduced (but not yet enacted) to broaden the circumstances in which hygienists can place sealants without this requirement.

HOW WELL IS MONTANA RESPONDING?

2011: **F**

2010: **D**

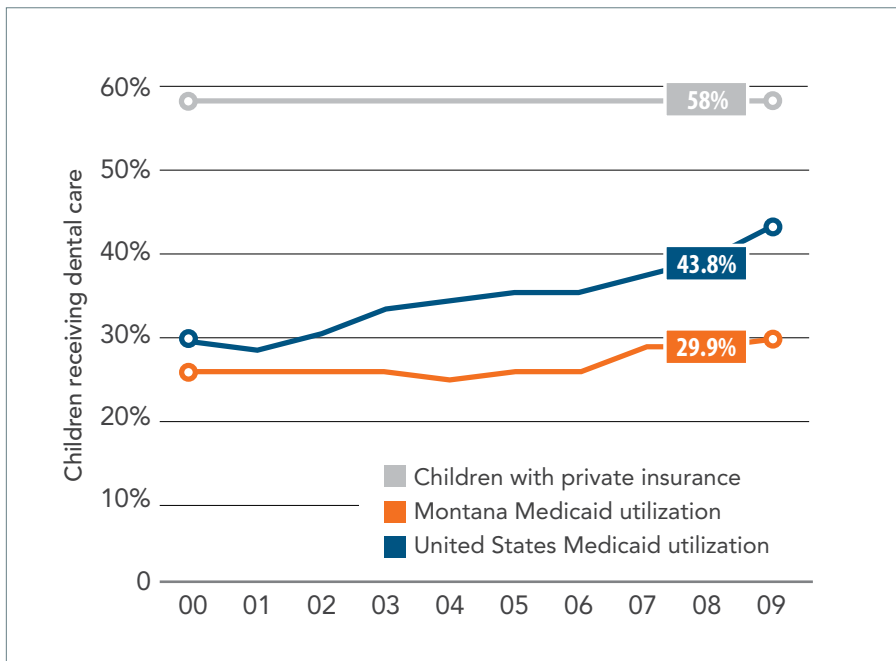
DATA YEAR	MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARKS FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES	STATE	NATIONAL	MEETS OR EXCEEDS	MET OR EXCEEDED
2010	Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs	0%	25%		
2010	Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam	NO	YES		✓
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	30.0%	75%		
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	29.9%	38.1%		
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	55.6%	60.5%		
2010	Pays medical providers for early preventive dental health care	YES	YES	✓	✓
2010	Authorizes new primary care dental providers	NO	YES		
2010	Tracks data on children's dental health	YES	YES	✓	✓
Total score				2 of 8	3 of 8

Grading: A = 6-8 points B = 5 points C = 4 points D = 3 points F = 0-2 points

The state had one of the lowest rates of utilization of dental services for Medicaid-enrolled children, with fewer than 30 percent using services in 2009. Additionally, the state provides fluoridated water to only 30 percent of its residents on community systems.

HOW BAD IS THE PROBLEM?

Too many children lack access to dental care, with severe outcomes. One measure of the problem: more than half of the children on Medicaid received no dental service in 2009.



SOURCE: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416.

SOURCES FOR BENCHMARKS: (1, 2, 7) Pew Center on the States survey of states; (3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; (4) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416; (5, 6) Medicaid/SCHIP Dental Association and American Academy of Pediatrics; (8) National Oral Health Surveillance System.

1. Administrative Rules of Montana, Department of Labor and Industry, Chapter 138, Board of Dentistry, section 24.138.509 (5). http://bsd.dli.mt.gov/license/bsd_boards/den_board/pdf/den_rules.pdf (accessed April 19, 2011).