

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

New Mexico

B

2011 GRADE

New Mexico meets five of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs, one fewer than in 2010. The rates paid to dentists by Medicaid did not keep pace with rising dental fees, and fell below the benchmark. Yet Medicaid utilization in New Mexico remains relatively high—nearly half of Medicaid-enrolled children received dental services.

The state faces major workforce challenges. More than 40 percent of New Mexico's population—more than 780,000 people—live in federally-designated Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas, and the state has one of the lowest numbers of dentists per capita. These workforce concerns have prompted public health advocates in New Mexico—with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation—to call for a new type of dental provider that can help address dental access needs.¹

HOW WELL IS NEW MEXICO RESPONDING?

2011: **B**

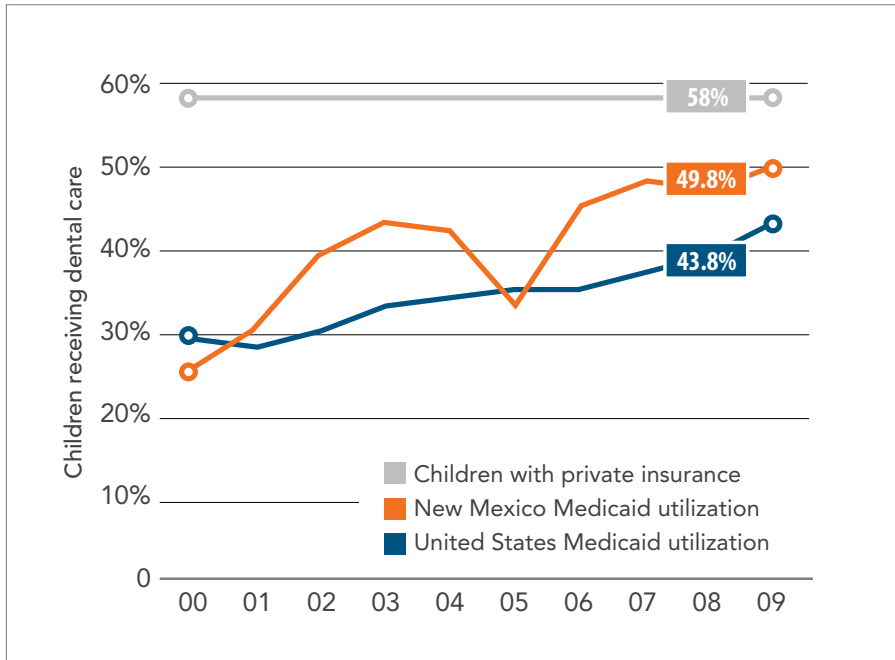
2010: **A**

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	<25%	25%		
2010	Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam	YES	YES	✓	✓
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	77.0%	75%	✓	✓
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	49.8%	38.1%	✓	✓
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	53.5%	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				5 of 8	6 of 8

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

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. Kathy Reincke and David Jordan, “W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports community-led efforts in five states to increase oral health care access by adding dental therapists to the new team,” W.K. Kellogg Foundation, November 17, 2010.