

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

D

2011 GRADE

North Carolina meets three of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs, one less than it met in 2010. While the state succeeds in bringing dental care to more than half of its Medicaid-enrolled children, it fell below the benchmark for Medicaid payments relative to dentists' usual fees.

Due to its large budget deficit, North Carolina recently cut funding to a significant portion of the state's oral health program, which used public-sector hygienists to promote dental health.¹

HOW WELL IS NORTH CAROLINA RESPONDING?

2011: **D**

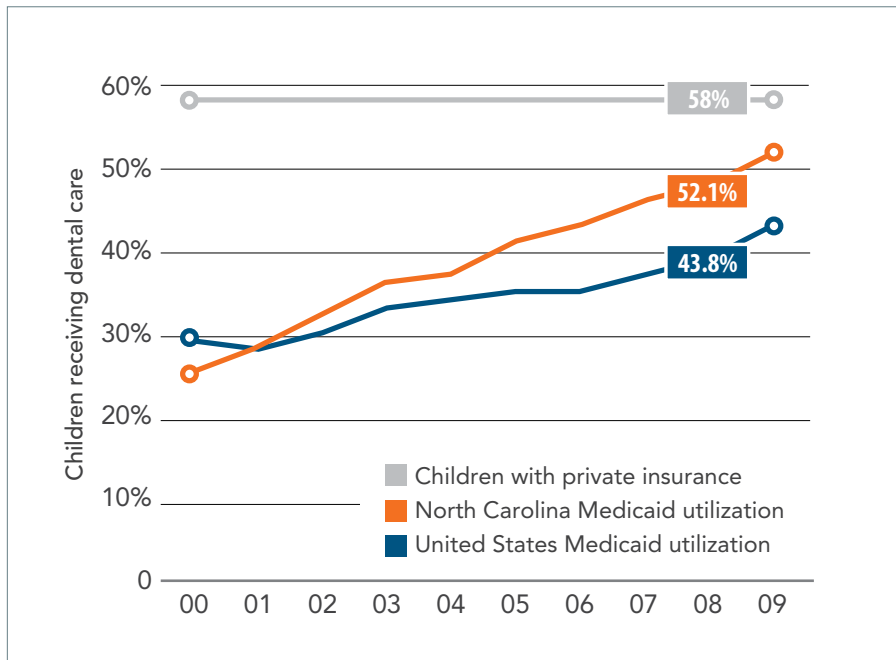
2010: **C**

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	NO	YES		
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	85.6%	75%	✓	✓
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	52.1%	38.1%	✓	✓
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	55.5%	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	NO	YES		
Total score				3 of 8	4 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. While more than half of the state's children on Medicaid received care in 2009, they were less likely to be treated than kids with private insurance.



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. "Loss of Hygienists Illustrates Crisis," Daily Reflector, Greenville, N.C. (November 14, 2010) <http://www.reflector.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-loss-hygienists-illustrates-crisis-175640>; (accessed November 14, 2010).