

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



2011 GRADE

Virginia meets half of the eight benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. The state's Medicaid payment rates fell relative to dentists' usual fees, sliding below Pew's benchmark. However, the state made progress by submitting basic screening data to the National Oral Health Surveillance System for the first time.

Virginia's "Smiles for Children" Medicaid program brought dental services to 45.7 percent of its Medicaid-enrolled kids in 2009, and a 2010 report by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services found that the program "has dramatically improved dental access and care for Virginia's low income children."¹

HOW WELL IS VIRGINIA RESPONDING?

2011: **C**

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	94.9%	75%	✓	✓
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	45.7%	38.1%	✓	✓
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	59.4%	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				4 of 8	4 of 8

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

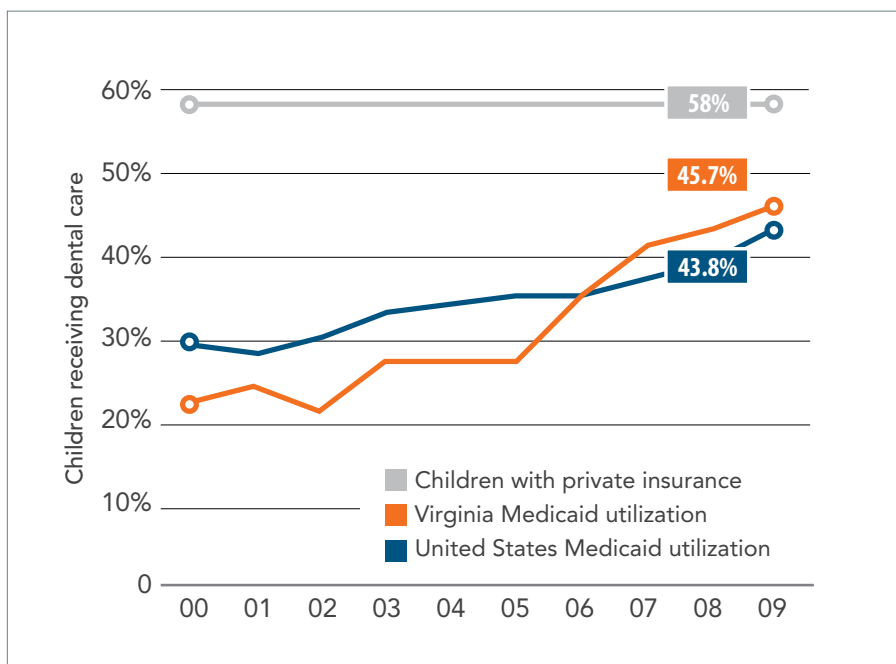


The Pew Center on the States is a division of The Pew Charitable Trusts that identifies and advances effective solutions to critical issues facing states. Pew is a nonprofit organization that applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public and stimulate civic life.

Virginia reduced its Medicaid adult dental services in 2010.² This cut could have a negative impact on children, as research indicates that parents who visit dentists are more likely to arrange dental care for their kids.³

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. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, “Commonwealth of Virginia Medicaid Dental Program Review,” 7, October 2010 <http://www.cms.gov/MedicaidDentalCoverage/Downloads/8staterep2.pdf> (accessed March 21, 2011).

2. V. Smith, et. al. , “Hoping for Economic Recovery, Preparing for Health Reform: A Look at Medicaid Spending, Coverage and Policy Trends Results from a 50-State Medicaid Budget Survey for State Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011,” Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, September 2010; <http://www.kff.org/medicaid/upload/8105.pdf>, (accessed October 20, 2010).

3. “Children More Likely to Visit the Dentist If Their Parents Do, Too,” ScienceDaily, February 16, 2010, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/02/100201091634.htm>; (accessed April 2011).