



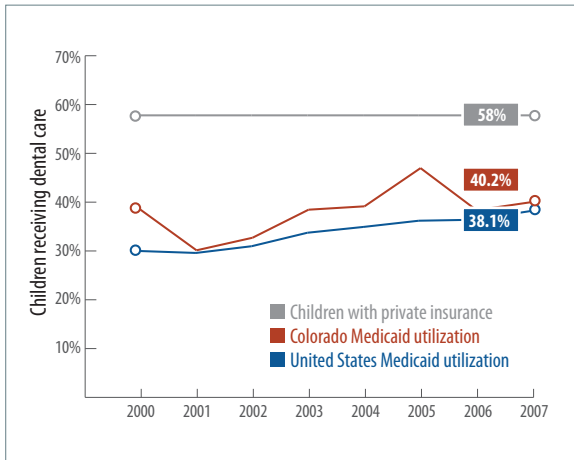
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Colorado



COLORADO meets five of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. The state reimburses dentists for Medicaid at a level that falls short of the national average, but the percentage of children on Medicaid seeing a dentist each year exceeded the national average in 2007, the latest year for which data are available. To improve access to care, the state recently approved Medicaid reimbursements to primary care physicians for providing preventive dental services to kids. The state's expansion of its sealant program, Be Smart & Seal Them!, has reached children who are at high risk for tooth decay in both rural and urban areas of the state. But the state just misses the national goal of providing fluoridated water to 75 percent of its population on community water supplies.

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 2007.



SOURCES FOR NATIONAL BENCHMARKS: 1) Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors; 2) American Dental Hygienists' Association; 3) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416; 4) American Dental Association; 5) Pew Center on the States, National Academy for State Health Policy and American Academy of Pediatrics; 6) National Oral Health Surveillance System.

HOW WELL IS COLORADO RESPONDING?

MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARK FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES

	STATE	NATIONAL	MEETS OR EXCEEDS
Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs, 2009	25-49%	25%	✓
Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam, 2009	Y	Y	✓
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	73.6%	75%	
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	40.2%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	58.3%	60.5%	
Pays medical providers for early preventive dental health care, 2009	Y	Y	✓
Authorizes new primary care dental providers, 2009	N	Y	
Tracks data on children's dental health, 2009	Y	Y	✓
Total score	B		5 of 8

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

Download the full report and explanatory notes by visiting www.pewcenteronthestates.org/costofdelay.



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