



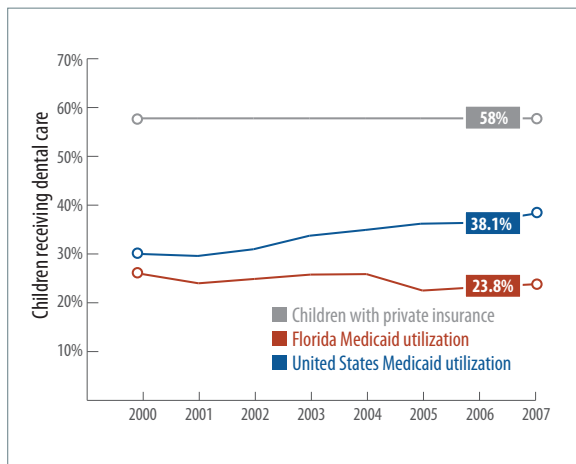
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Florida



FLORIDA meets just two of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. The state exceeds the national targets only for the percentage of residents receiving fluoridated water supplies and reimbursement to physicians for preventive dental services. Florida falls especially short in its rate of Medicaid-enrolled children who received dental care in 2007, the latest year for which data are available; it is one of just three states (joined by Delaware and Kentucky) where less than a quarter of children accessed dental services. Pew calculates that the Sunshine State faces a severe workforce shortage and needs at least 750 new dentists—almost one-tenth of all of the new dentists needed nationwide—to provide care to unserved areas. Florida's restrictions on dental hygienists further complicate these challenges. Although the state Board of Dentistry recently lifted the requirement that dentists directly supervise hygienists applying sealants, children must still see a dentist first. An elimination of that requirement had been proposed, but not enacted, at the time of this writing.

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 FLORIDA 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%	25%	
Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam, 2009	N	Y	
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	77.7%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	23.8%	38.1%	
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	30.5%	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	N	Y	
Total score	F		2 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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