



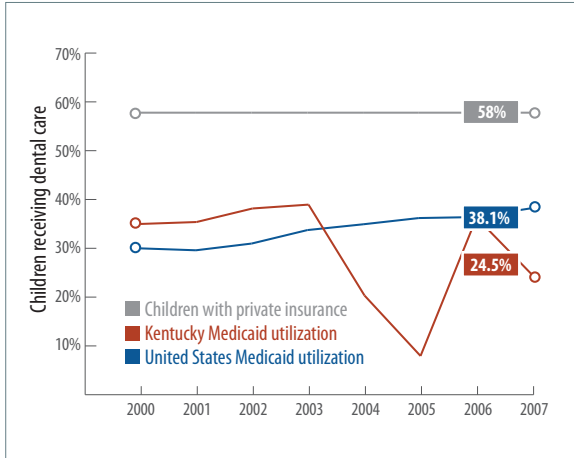
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Kentucky



KENTUCKY meets just half of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. Despite reimbursement rates that exceed the national average, the state is one of only three where less than 25 percent of low-income children received dental services in 2007, the latest year for which data are available. People in Kentucky who are on community water systems have good access to fluoridated water—nearly 100 percent of the population is served, ranking Kentucky second among jurisdictions on this benchmark (Washington, D.C. is at 100 percent). In October 2009, Governor Steve Beshear (D) announced a three-year, \$1.6 million pediatric dental initiative that will train dentists to work with children and provide portable dental equipment to increase access to care.¹

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. Kentucky submitted data in 2005 that appear to be abnormally low, indicating possible problems with the submission. Please use caution when interpreting the data in question for this year.

¹ Office of Governor Steve Beshear, "Governor Beshear Announces Ground-breaking Initiative to Address Children's Dental Health in Appalachia," (press release, October 13, 2009), <http://governor.ky.gov/pressrelease> (accessed January 14, 2010).

HOW WELL IS KENTUCKY 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	99.8%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	24.5%	38.1%	
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	84%	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	C		4 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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