



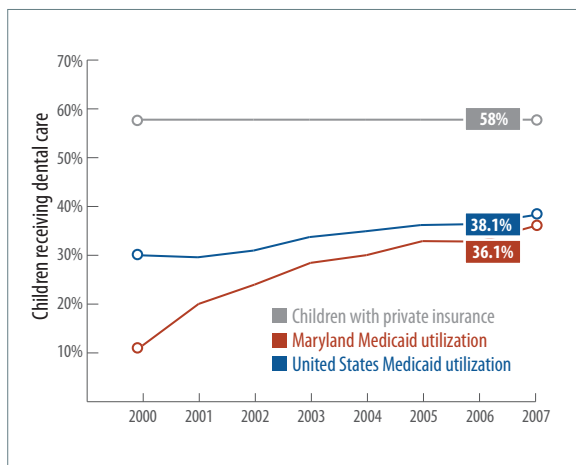
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Maryland



MARYLAND is a national leader, meeting six of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. The state has made improvements since the 2007 death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver from a tooth infection, including streamlined Medicaid administrative processes and an infusion of \$14 million in state and federal Medicaid funding that facilitated increases in the state's reimbursement rates for dentists. Improvements authorized in 2008 also allowed hygienists to provide cleanings, sealants and fluoride treatments in clinics, schools and Head Start programs without the on-site supervision of a dentist.¹ Maryland misses just two benchmarks: Its Medicaid utilization rate of about 36 percent of children receiving dental services in 2007, the latest year for which data are available, falls below the national average, and it has not authorized new primary dental care providers.

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.

¹ M. Otto, "Brushed Off No Longer: Citing Gaps in Care, Hygienists Are Beginning to Treat Patients Without Direct Supervision by Dentists," *Washington Post*, April 22, 2008, HE01.

HOW WELL IS MARYLAND 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	93.8%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	36.1%	38.1%	
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	78.3%	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	A		6 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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