



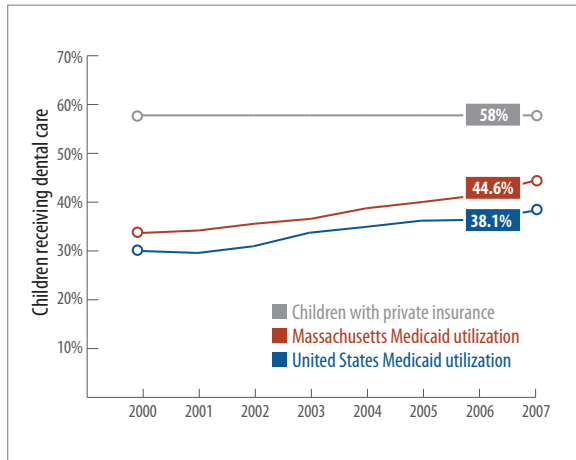
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Massachusetts



MASSACHUSETTS meets just half of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. Massachusetts' Medicaid program reimburses dentists at a level that exceeds the national average, and nearly 45 percent of Medicaid-enrolled children received some dental care in 2007, the latest year for which data are available—beating the national target. However, only 59 percent of Massachusetts residents have access to optimally fluoridated water systems, far short of the national goal of 75 percent. The state's sealant programs reach less than one-quarter of high-risk schools. Recent changes will allow hygienists in schools and other public health settings to place sealants without a dentist's prior exam, but those changes were not yet in effect at the time this report went to press.

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 MASSACHUSETTS 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 | 59.1% | 75% | |
| Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007 | 44.6% | 38.1% | ✓ |
| Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008 | 71.9% | 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.



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.

901 E Street NW | 10th Floor | Washington, DC 20004 | www.pewcenteronthestates.org