



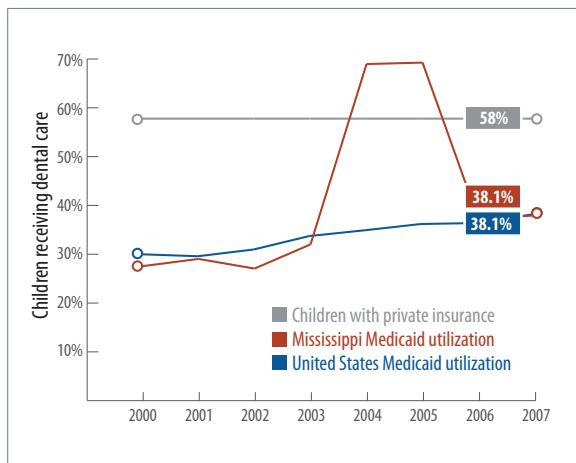
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Mississippi



MISSISSIPPI meets just three of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. According to Pew's calculations, the state is second only to Louisiana for residents without access to dental services, with almost a third of its population—930,000 people—unserved. While Mississippi has worked hard to bring fluoridation to just more than half of its residents, it still falls well short of the national goal for optimal fluoridation of community water supplies. Likewise, it fails to meet the benchmark for sealants, with programs in less than one-quarter of high-risk schools. On a more positive note, the state reimburses dentists for Medicaid at a level that exceeds the national average, and it just meets the national average on Medicaid utilization, with 38.1 percent of Medicaid-enrolled children using dental services in 2007, the latest year for which data are available.

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.

Mississippi submitted data in 2004 and 2005 that appear to be abnormally high, indicating possible problems with the submission. Please use caution when interpreting the data in question for these years.

HOW WELL IS MISSISSIPPI 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	50.9%	75%	
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	38.1%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	64%	60.5%	✓
Pays medical providers for early preventive dental health care, 2009	N	Y	
Authorizes new primary care dental providers, 2009	N	Y	
Tracks data on children's dental health, 2009	Y	Y	✓
Total score	D		3 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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