



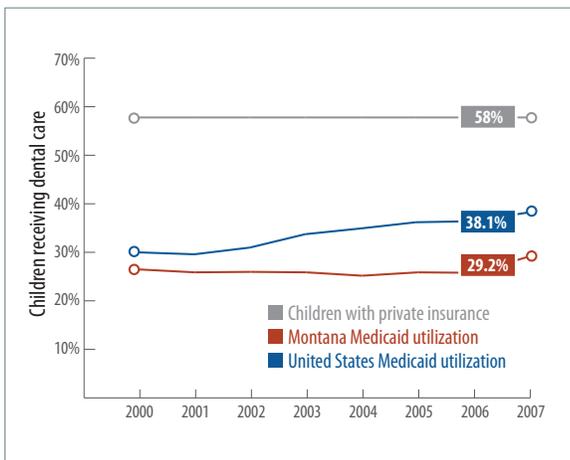
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Montana



MONTANA meets just three of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. Montana is one of just nine states that did not provide fluoridated water to half its population in 2006, the latest data available at this writing; more than 68 percent of its residents on community systems go without. The state also falls under the national averages for prevalence of school-based sealant programs and the rate at which it reimburses its dentists for services to Medicaid-enrolled children. On a positive note, Montana pays medical providers for offering basic preventive care to Medicaid-enrolled kids, and collects and submits nationally comparable data to the National Oral Health Surveillance System. In 2008, the state oral health program introduced a dental education agenda aimed at infant and childcare workers, but the program is so new that the results are not yet known.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.

¹ Pew Center on the States communication with Veronica Newhart, oral health education specialist, December 8, 2009.

HOW WELL IS MONTANA RESPONDING?

MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARK FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES

	STATE	NATIONAL	MEETS OR EXCEEDS
Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs, 2009	0%	25%	
Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam, 2009	Y	Y	✓
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	31.3%	75%	
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	29.2%	38.1%	
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	58.5%	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	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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