



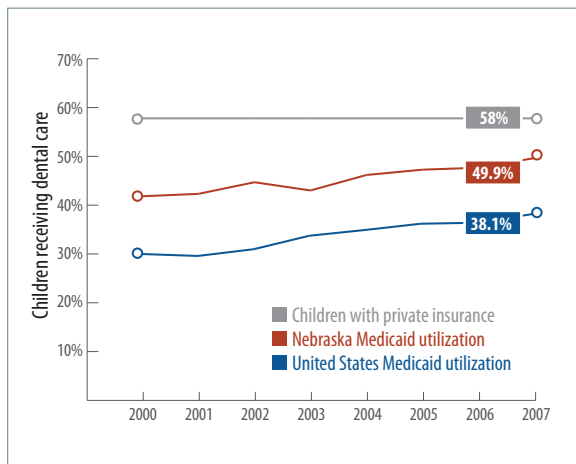
# The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Nebraska



**NEBRASKA** meets just half of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. Nebraska is one of just two Midwestern states not meeting the national goal of providing fluoridated water to 75 percent of the population on community systems, with about 70 percent of the state's population on fluoridated water. A mandatory fluoridation bill passed the legislature in 2008, but it included an opt-out provision for communities—and 75 percent have taken that option. Without a dental director, the state health agency lacked the capacity to launch a successful public education campaign about the benefits of fluoridation. On the positive side, Nebraska ranks fourth in the nation in providing dental services to children enrolled in Medicaid—with nearly half of children receiving dental care in 2007, the latest year for which data are available—despite reimbursement rates for dentists that fall below the national average.

## 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 NEBRASKA 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	Y	Y	✓
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	69.8%	75%	
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	49.9%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	50.3%	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	✓
<b>Total score</b>	<b>C</b>		<b>4 of 8</b>

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](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/costofdelay).



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