



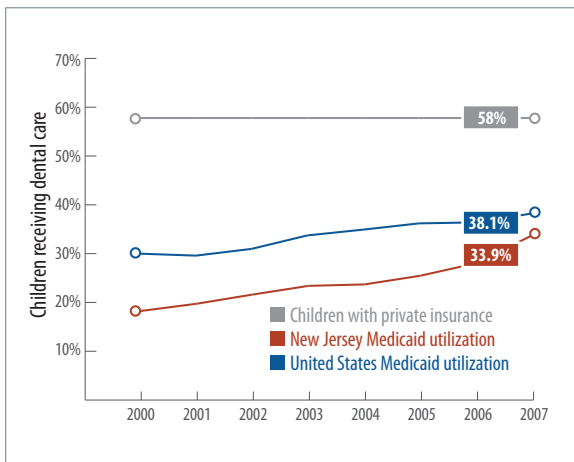
# The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children New Jersey



**NEW JERSEY** meets just one of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs, making it the worst performer of all states. New Jersey actually has the highest Medicaid reimbursement rate—exceeding dentists' median fees—in the country, far exceeding the national average. Still, less than one in three dentists in New Jersey treats Medicaid-enrolled children, and the state does not reimburse medical professionals who offer basic preventive services to Medicaid-enrolled kids.<sup>1</sup> New Jersey stands out in the region for its lack of use of fluoride and sealants. It is the least fluoridated state in the Northeast: Less than 25 percent of residents on community systems have fluoridated water, and the state does not have sealant programs in any of its high-risk schools.

## 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.

<sup>1</sup> Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, Synopses of State Dental Public Health Programs: Data for 2007-2008. (New Bern, N.C.: ASTDD, 2009, 28-30).

## HOW WELL IS NEW JERSEY 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	N	Y	
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	22.6%	75%	
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	33.9%	38.1%	
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	102.6%	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	N	Y	
<b>Total score</b>	<b>F</b>		<b>1 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).