



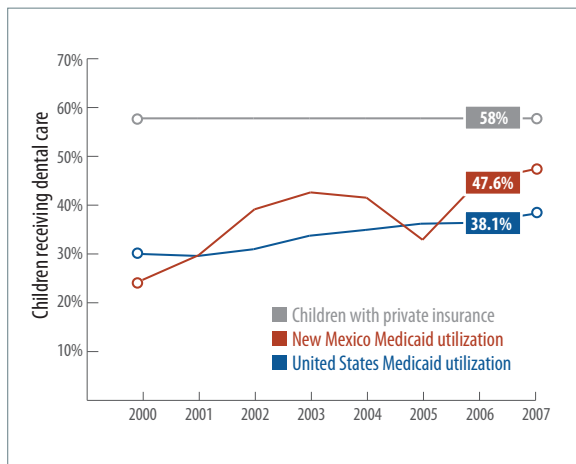
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children New Mexico



NEW MEXICO is a national leader, meeting six of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. New Mexico is the only state in the West that has met the goal for water fluoridation, with 77 percent of its residents on community systems receiving optimally fluoridated water. The state's Medicaid program reimburses dentists at a level that exceeds the national average, and has outperformed most other states in utilization: In 2007, the latest year for which data are available, nearly 48 percent of Medicaid-enrolled children received dental care. However, the state falls short of the national average in terms of prevalence of school-based sealant programs, and it has yet to authorize a new primary care dental provider. The state faces steep dentist shortages, ranking 49th among states in dentists per capita, and would need at least 100 dentists to meet the needs of its unserved residents.

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 NEW MEXICO 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	77%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	47.6%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	60.8%	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	A		6 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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