



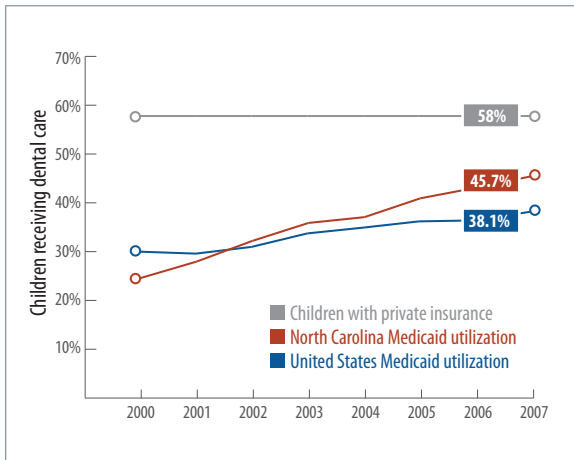
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children North Carolina



NORTH CAROLINA meets just half of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. North Carolina's school sealant programs reach less than one-quarter of high-risk schools, and the state does not submit data to the National Oral Health Surveillance System. A large portion of the state's oral health program narrowly avoided elimination because of budget cuts in fiscal year 2010. However, North Carolina fares much better on Medicaid benchmarks, with a program that has outperformed the national average on both rates of reimbursement for dentists and of children who receive dental services. And the state's Into the Mouths of Babies program makes it possible for medical providers to apply fluoride varnish, educate parents and children about dental hygiene and make referrals in medical settings, such as well-child exams. The program has been a model for other states.

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 NORTH CAROLINA 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	87.6%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	45.7%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	64.4%	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	N	Y	
Total score	C		4 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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901 E Street NW | 10th Floor | Washington, DC 20004 | www.pewcenteronthestates.org