



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

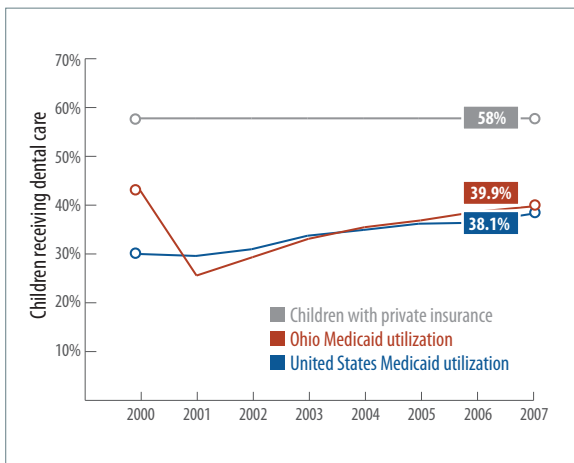
B

GRADE

OHIO meets five of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. The state reimburses dentists for Medicaid at a level that falls well short of the national average and has not yet authorized a new primary care dental provider, but the percentage of Medicaid-enrolled children who saw a dentist in 2007, the latest year for which data are available, just exceeds the national average. Ohio's successful school-based sealant program is a national model, thanks in part to rigorous monitoring and evaluation of program effectiveness. Loosening supervision requirements for dental hygienists working in these programs would help bring their benefits to even more children, however. One of four children in the state still suffers from untreated tooth decay, and Pew calculates that Ohio would need approximately 180 additional dentists to meet the needs of residents in unserved areas.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 National Oral Health Surveillance System, *Percentage of Third-Grade Students with Untreated Tooth Decay, and Percentage of Third-Grade Students with Dental Sealants*, <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/nohss/> (accessed July 8, 2009).

HOW WELL IS OHIO RESPONDING?

MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARK FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES

	STATE	NATIONAL	MEETS OR EXCEEDS
Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs, 2009	50-74%	25%	✓
Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam, 2009	N	Y	
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	89.3%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	39.9%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	48.1%	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	B		5 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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