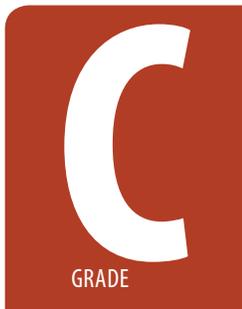




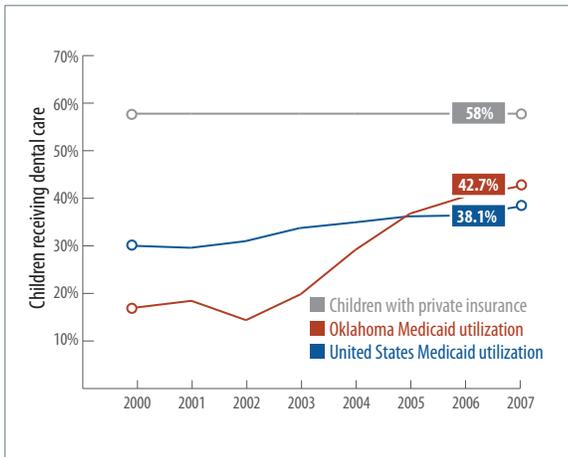
# The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Oklahoma



**OKLAHOMA** meets just half of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. Even though 40 percent of third graders in Oklahoma have untreated tooth decay, the state lacks a school-based sealant program.<sup>1</sup> The state does not reimburse medical professionals for providing basic preventive dental care. And nearly 74 percent of Oklahoma's population had access to community water supplies with optimal fluoride as of 2006, the latest available data at the time of this writing—just missing the national goal of 75 percent. Oklahoma has made progress, however: The percentage of Medicaid-enrolled children receiving dental care has increased from only 17 percent in 2000 to 43 percent in 2007, the latest year for which data are available, and Medicaid reimbursement rates for dentists exceed 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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 OKLAHOMA 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	Y	Y	✓
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	73.5%	75%	
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	42.7%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	66.7%	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	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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