



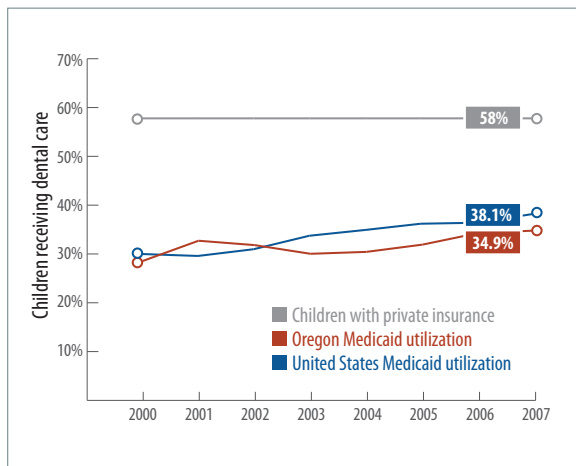
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Oregon



OREGON meets just half of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. The state is one of only nine that fail to provide fluoridated water to more than half of its citizens, with about 27 percent of the population on community systems receiving it as of 2006, the latest data available at the time of this writing. A 2007 legislative effort to mandate the fluoridation of all community-supplied water in the state failed.¹ Oregon reimburses dentists for Medicaid at a level that falls well short of the national average, and only about 35 percent of Medicaid-enrolled children received any dental care in 2007, the latest year for which data are available. Oregon is on the right track in a number of areas: At least half of its high-risk schools benefit from sealant programs, and the state makes effective use of hygienists in these settings. It also reimburses medical professionals who offer basic preventive dental services to Medicaid-enrolled children.

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 D. Colburn and B. Graves, "Mention Fluoride, and the Fight's On," *The Oregonian*, http://www.odha.org/new/documents/FluorOregonian2-1-07_000.pdf (accessed December 18, 2009).

HOW WELL IS OREGON 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	Y	Y	✓
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	27.4%	75%	
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	34.9%	38.1%	
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	46%	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	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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