



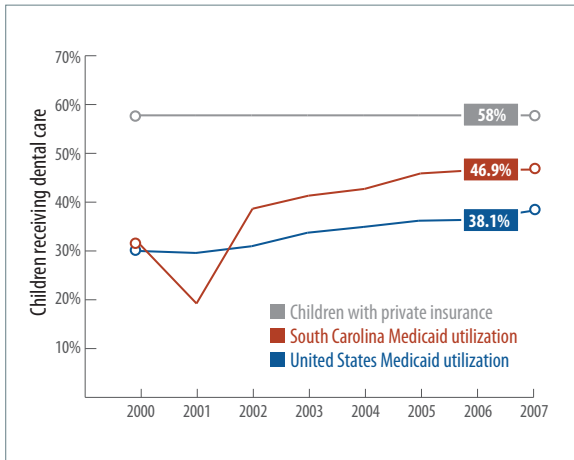
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children South Carolina



SOUTH CAROLINA is the national leader in Pew's assessment, the only state to meet seven of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. Nearly 95 percent of South Carolinians receive fluoridated water and half of the state's high-risk schools have sealant programs. The state's Medicaid reimbursement rate is nearly 63 percent—higher than the national average—thanks to a program started a decade ago to improve its Medicaid processes and dentist participation. Between 1999 and 2006, the number of licensed dentists enrolled in Medicaid nearly doubled, making it easier for children to find care.¹ South Carolina falls short on just one benchmark: authorizing the use of new primary dental professionals.

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 A. Borchgrevink, A. Snyder, and S. Gehshan, "The Effects of Medicaid Reimbursement Rates on Access to Dental Care," National Academy of State Health Policy, March 2008, <http://www.nashp.org/node/670> (accessed January 14, 2010).

HOW WELL IS SOUTH 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	50-74%	25%	✓
Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam, 2009	Y	Y	✓
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	94.6%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	46.9%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	62.8%	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		7 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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