



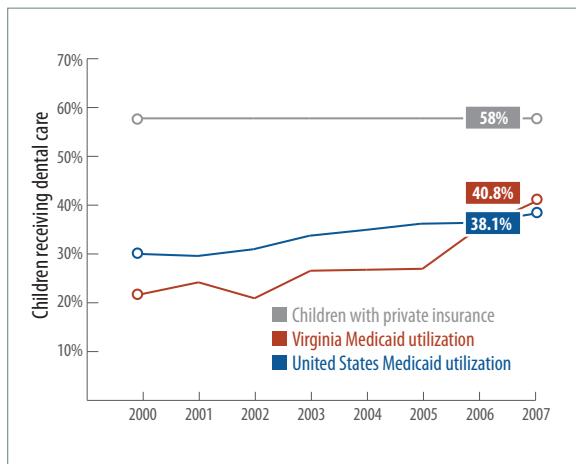
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Virginia



VIRGINIA meets just half of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. Sealant programs serve only a small portion of high-risk schools in the state, and the state requires a dentist's prior exam before hygienists working in such programs can place sealants. In addition, Virginia fails to report data to the National Oral Health Surveillance System. But since implementing reforms in 2005, the state has raised Medicaid reimbursement rates for dentists by 30 percent and streamlined program administration by scrapping eight individual managed care organizations in favor of one specialized vendor.¹ The number of dentists participating in Medicaid had more than doubled to 1,264 as of September 2009, and the percentage of Medicaid-enrolled children ages 1 to 18 who see a dentist each year increased from 22 percent in 2000 to nearly 41 percent in 2007, the latest year for which data are available.

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 Pew Center on the States interview with Patrick Finnerty, director of the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, November 10, 2009.

HOW WELL IS VIRGINIA 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	95%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	40.8%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	62%	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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