



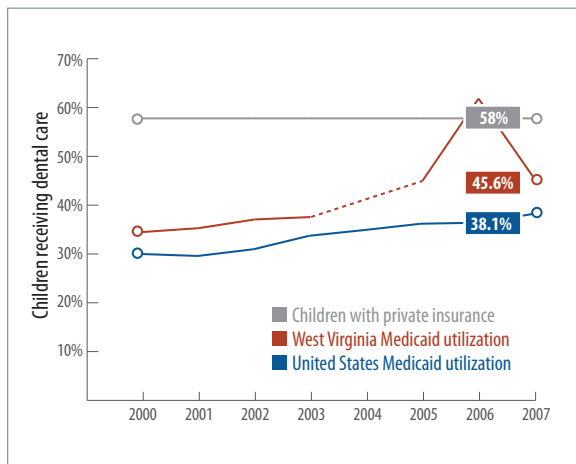
# The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children West Virginia



**WEST VIRGINIA** meets just two of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. The state lacks a school-based sealant program, and it is one of only seven that continue to require a dentist to be present while a hygienist applies sealants to a child's teeth. West Virginia does not reimburse medical professionals for providing basic preventive services to Medicaid-enrolled children. The fact that the state lacks any dedicated, full-time dental staff exacerbates the challenges: The absence of such staff makes it difficult for West Virginia to track and improve the performance of its limited dental programs, and indeed, it does not report data to the National Oral Health Surveillance System. On the positive side, more than 90 percent of West Virginia residents on community water systems receive fluoridated water, and nearly 46 percent of Medicaid-enrolled children received dental services in 2007, the latest year for which data are available—beating 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.

West Virginia submitted data in 2006 that appear to be abnormally high, indicating possible problems with the submission. Please use caution when interpreting the data in question for this year. West Virginia did not submit Medicaid data for 2004.

## HOW WELL IS WEST 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	0%	25%	
Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam, 2009	N	Y	
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	91.7%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	45.6%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	49.9%	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	N	Y	
<b>Total score</b>	<b>F</b>		<b>2 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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