

The State of Children's Dental Health: Making Coverage Matter

Oklahoma

B

2011 GRADE

Oklahoma meets five of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs, improving by one letter grade in 2010. The improvement reflects Oklahoma's reaching the national goal of providing fluoridated water to 75 percent of its residents on community systems in 2008. However, the state still has no sealant programs in high-risk schools. The percentage of Medicaid-enrolled children receiving dental services improved in 2009, but there is still significant unmet need. In 2008 and 2009, more than 13,000 central Oklahoma residents went to emergency rooms seeking treatment for dental conditions.¹ The state is testing new types of dental providers through the University of Oklahoma's Community Dental Health Coordinator pilot program, an approach supported by the American Dental Association.²

HOW WELL IS OKLAHOMA RESPONDING?

2011: **B**

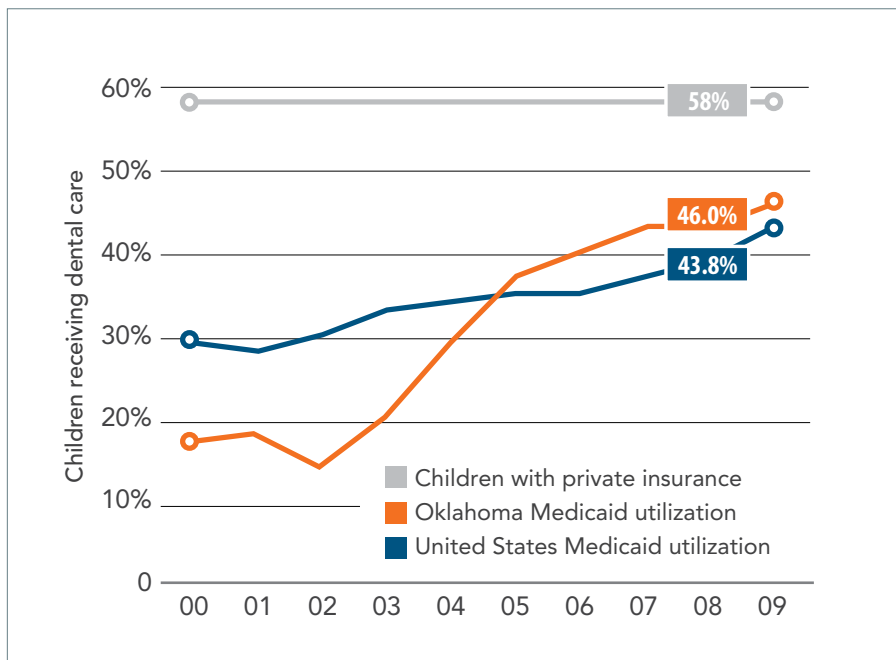
2010: **C**

DATA YEAR	MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARKS FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES	STATE	NATIONAL	MEETS OR EXCEEDS	MET OR EXCEEDED
2010	Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs	0%	25%		
2010	Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam	YES	YES	✓	✓
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	75.3%	75%	✓	
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	46.0%	38.1%	✓	✓
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	64.4%	60.5%	✓	✓
2010	Pays medical providers for early preventive dental health care	NO	YES		
2010	Authorizes new primary care dental providers	NO	YES		
2010	Tracks data on children's dental health	YES	YES	✓	✓
Total score				5 of 8	4 of 8

Grading: A = 6-8 points B = 5 points C = 4 points D = 3 points F = 0-2 points

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 2009.



SOURCE: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416.

SOURCES FOR BENCHMARKS: (1, 2, 7) Pew Center on the States survey of states; (3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; (4) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416; (5, 6) Medicaid/SCHIP Dental Association and American Academy of Pediatrics; (8) National Oral Health Surveillance System.

1. “Overwhelming need for free, reduced-price dental care in Oklahoma,” The Oklahoman, December 5, 2010.
2. “First Group of Community Dental Health Coordinators Complete ADA Pilot Program,” The American Dental Association News, November 4, 2010, <http://www.ada.org/5030.aspx> (accessed January 20, 2011).