

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

A

2011 GRADE

South Carolina meets six of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs, one less than it achieved in 2010. The decline reflects that Medicaid rates have slipped relative to dentists' usual fees. Nonetheless, the percent of Medicaid-enrolled children receiving dental services has increased from 46.9 percent to 51.9 percent.

South Carolina provides fluoridated water to 94.4 percent of its residents and has sealant programs in over half of its high-risk schools. In 2010, the state enacted a new law to institute a targeted school-based dental screening and education program in several underserved counties. The law also establishes a "community oral health coordinator" to help connect children with dental treatment needs with a dental provider.¹

HOW WELL IS SOUTH CAROLINA RESPONDING?

2011: **A**

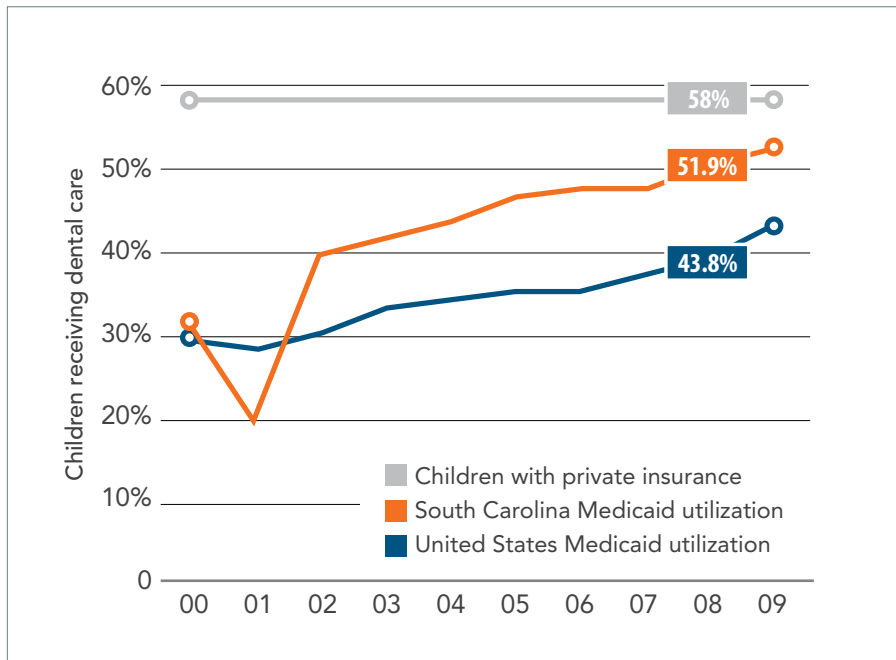
2010: **A**

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	50-74%	25%	✓	✓
2010	Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam	YES	YES	✓	✓
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	94.4%	75%	✓	✓
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	51.9%	38.1%	✓	✓
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	57.1%	60.5%		✓
2010	Pays medical providers for early preventive dental health care	YES	YES	✓	✓
2010	Authorizes new primary care dental providers	NO	YES		
2010	Tracks data on children's dental health	YES	YES	✓	✓
Total score				6 of 8	7 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. While more than half of the state's children on Medicaid received care in 2009, they were less likely to be treated than kids with private insurance.



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. South Carolina, 118th Session (2009-2010), Act 235. http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess118_2009-2010/bills/286.htm (accessed March 21, 2011).