

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

# D

2011 GRADE

**Pennsylvania** meets three of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs, an improvement since 2010. The state now provides Medicaid reimbursements to medical providers for preventive dental health services, such as fluoride varnish.

In Pennsylvania, Temple University is overseeing a pilot program to train students to work as dental community health workers in urban areas. The program is one of several Community Dental Health Coordinator pilots that are being supported by the American Dental Association.<sup>1</sup> In the area of fluoridation, Pennsylvania continues to lag, providing fluoridated water to just over half of its citizens.

## HOW WELL IS PENNSYLVANIA RESPONDING?

2011: **D**

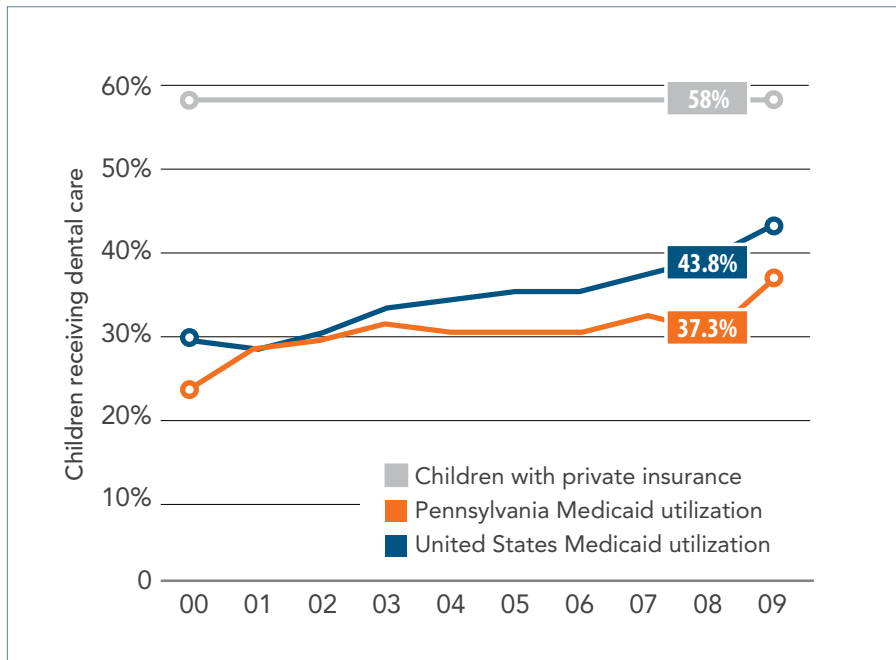
2010: **F**

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	<25%	25%		
2010	Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam	YES	YES	✓	✓
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	54.3%	75%		
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	37.3%	38.1%		
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	48.8%	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	✓	✓
<b>Total score</b>				<b>3 of 8</b>	<b>2 of 8</b>

**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. "First Group of Community Dental Health Coordinators Complete ADA Pilot Program," American Dental Association News, November 4, 2010, , <http://www.ada.org/5030.aspx> (accessed January 20, 2011).