

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

Wisconsin



2011 GRADE

Wisconsin meets half of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. Use of dental services among Medicaid-enrolled children remains stubbornly low, with just three in 10 children receiving care. Likewise, Medicaid payment rates remain far below the benchmark.

Recent news coverage found that nine of 10 dentists in Wisconsin accept few or no Medicaid patients, citing the low reimbursement rates. Rural communities suffer the most, with only about half as many dentists per person as urban areas.¹

HOW WELL IS WISCONSIN RESPONDING?

2011: **C**

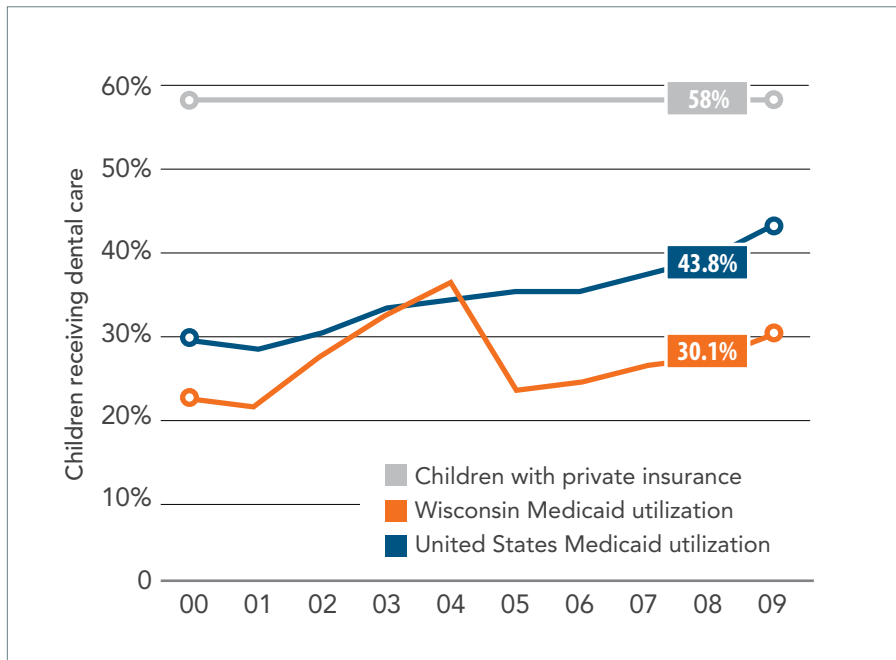
2010: **C**

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	<25%	25%		
2010	Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam	YES	YES	✓	✓
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	89.7%	75%	✓	✓
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	30.1%	38.1%		
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	36.4%	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				4 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. D. Wahlberg, "Too few dentists, too much pain in rural Wisconsin communities," Wisconsin State Journal, May 23, 2010; http://host.madison.com/wsj/special-section/rural_health/article_82a4d6ae-65c1-11df-9a2f-001cc4c002e0.html, (accessed October 20, 2010).