

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

Illinois

B

2011 GRADE

Illinois meets five of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health. The state is a national leader in fluoridation, bringing optimally fluoridated water to over 95 percent of its residents. Additionally, Illinois is one of only nine states that have sealant programs in most of their high-risk schools. Although Medicaid reimbursement rates fell slightly in relation to dentists' usual fees, the state still meets the benchmark for enrollees' use of dental services. A bill that would allow qualified dental hygienists to provide hygiene services in certain settings without a dentist's prior exam, including sealants in school programs, has been introduced in the 2011-2012 legislative session.¹

HOW WELL IS ILLINOIS RESPONDING?

2011: **B**

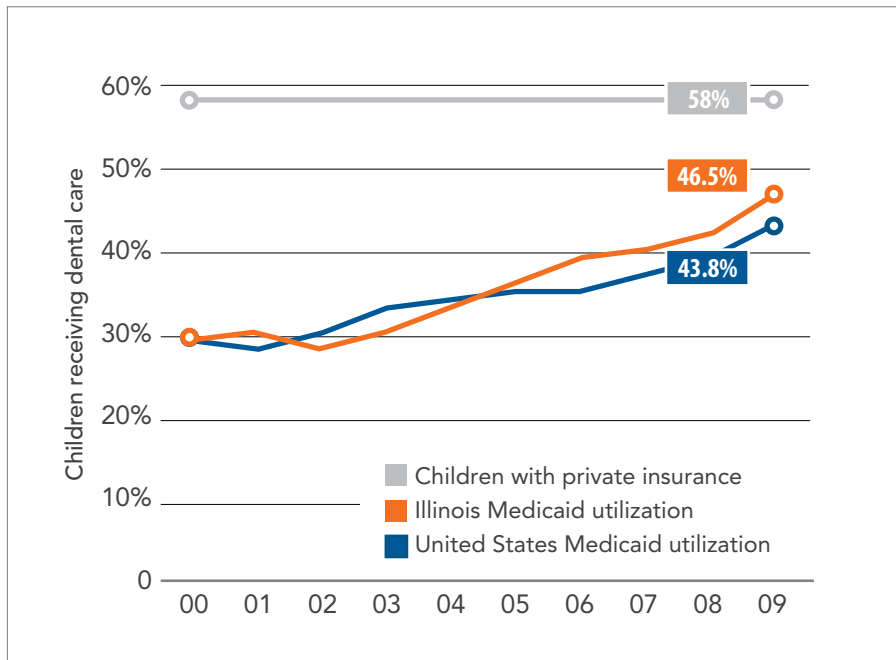
2010: **B**

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	NO	YES		
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	95.4%	75%	✓	✓
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	46.5%	38.1%	✓	✓
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	48.4%	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				5 of 8	5 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. Illinois General Assembly, SB1919. <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=1919&GAID=11&DocTypeID=SB&LegId=58084&SessionID=84&GA=97> (accessed March 21, 2011).