



The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children South Dakota

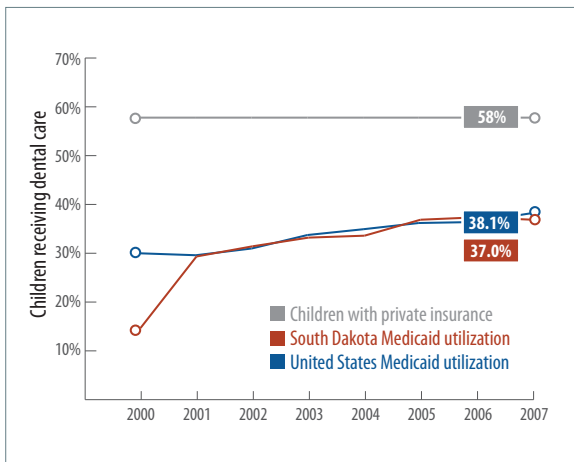


SOUTH DAKOTA meets just half of the eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. The state has more than doubled its Medicaid utilization rate in the past decade, but still falls just short of the national average: In 2007, the latest year for which data are available, 37 percent of Medicaid-enrolled children received some dental care, up from 15 percent in 2000. Despite the fact that one in three third graders suffers from untreated tooth decay, the state's high-risk schools lack school sealant programs, and the state requires a dentist's exam before hygienists can place sealants.¹ On the positive side, 95 percent of South Dakotans receive fluoridated water, and the state reimburses medical professionals for offering basic preventive dental services to Medicaid-enrolled

children.

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 2007.



SOURCES FOR NATIONAL BENCHMARKS: 1) Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors; 2) American Dental Hygienists' Association; 3) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416; 4) American Dental Association; 5) Pew Center on the States, National Academy for State Health Policy and American Academy of Pediatrics; 6) National Oral Health Surveillance System.

¹ National Oral Health Surveillance System, *Percentage of Third-Grade Students with Untreated Tooth Decay, and Percentage of Third-Grade Students with Dental Sealants*, <http://apps.nccdc.cdc.gov/nohss/> (accessed July 8, 2009).

HOW WELL IS SOUTH DAKOTA RESPONDING?

MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARK FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES

	STATE	NATIONAL	MEETS OR EXCEEDS
Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs, 2009	0%	25%	
Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam, 2009	N	Y	
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	95%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	37%	38.1%	
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	70.8%	60.5%	✓
Pays medical providers for early preventive dental health care, 2009	Y	Y	✓
Authorizes new primary care dental providers, 2009	N	Y	
Tracks data on children's dental health, 2009	Y	Y	✓
Total score	C		4 of 8

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

Download the full report and explanatory notes by visiting www.pewcenteronthestates.org/costofdelay.



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