



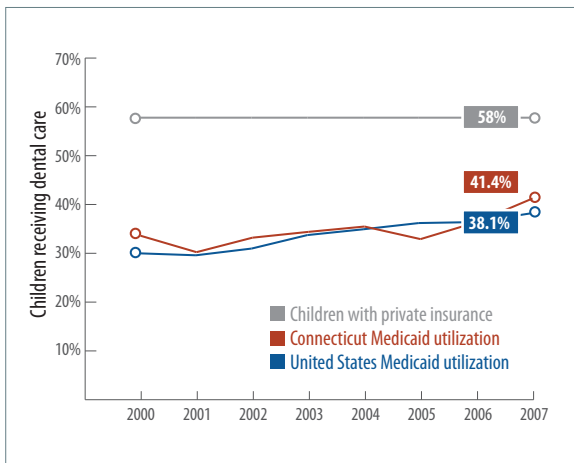
The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Connecticut



CONNECTICUT is a national leader, meeting six of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children’s dental health needs. The state ranks fourth nationwide on its Medicaid reimbursement rate to dentists, and improvements in that rate have helped expand children’s access to necessary services. Children’s access to care has been made easier by the state’s willingness to allow dental hygienists to provide sealants in schools without requiring a dentist’s exam. A team of 10 hygienists, three dentists, four dental assistants and two dental clerks completed 47,000 dental procedures in Hartford—an inner-city school district of 25,000 students—in 2008 alone.¹ Connecticut fails to meet just two targets: Despite the success of the Hartford initiative, less than 25 percent of the state’s high-risk schools have sealant programs in place, and the state does not yet authorize new primary care dental professionals.

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 Pew Center on the States interview with Jill Quast, SAND School Dental Hygienist, Hartford Public Schools, September 10, 2009.

HOW WELL IS CONNECTICUT RESPONDING?

MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARK FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES

	STATE	NATIONAL	MEETS OR EXCEEDS
Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs, 2009	<25%	25%	
Hygienists can place sealants without dentist’s prior exam, 2009	Y	Y	✓
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	88.9%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	41.4%	38.1%	✓
Share of dentists’ median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	86.5%	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	A		6 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.



The Pew Center on the States is a division of The Pew Charitable Trusts that identifies and advances effective solutions to critical issues facing states. Pew is a nonprofit organization that applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public and stimulate civic life.

901 E Street NW | 10th Floor | Washington, DC 20004 | www.pewcenteronthestates.org