



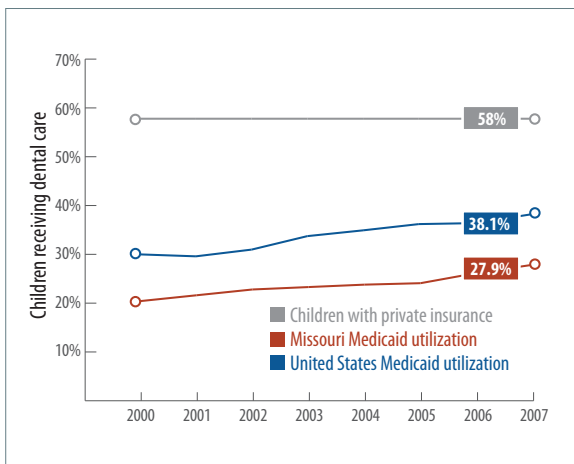
# The Cost of Delay: State Dental Policies Fail One in Five Children Missouri



**MISSOURI** meets just half of eight policy benchmarks aimed at addressing children's dental health needs. Only about 28 percent of Medicaid-enrolled children received any dental service in 2007, the latest year for which data are available, falling short of the national average. A shortage of dental professionals makes it challenging for children in some areas of the state to access the care they need; all told, more than a million Missouri residents—nearly 18 percent of the state's population—are unserved by dentists. In 2005, the state created a school-based fluoride varnish, screening and education program that has helped improve access to preventive services for children and is growing steadily. However, the state does not have a school-based sealant program.

## 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.

## HOW WELL IS MISSOURI 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	Y	Y	✓
Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies, 2006	79.7%	75%	✓
Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care, 2007	27.9%	38.1%	
Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid, 2008	46.8%	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	✓
<b>Total score</b>	<b>C</b>		<b>4 of 8</b>

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](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/costofdelay).



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