



THE
PEW
CENTER ON THE STATES

Cost-Effective Ways To Improve Children's Oral Health

Matt Jacob
NCSL Legislative Summit
August 9, 2012

The Pew Children's Dental Campaign



Our Mission:

The Pew Children's Dental Campaign strives for cost-effective policies that will mean millions more children get the basic dental care they need to grow, learn and lead healthy lives.



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Overview of Pew's findings



- Preventable dental conditions were the primary diagnosis in **830,000+** visits to hospital ERs nationwide in 2009 — a 16% increase from 2006.
- Children accounted for more than **49,000** of these ER visits.
- Many ER visits are made by Medicaid enrollees or the uninsured. Taxpayers and consumers pay a high price for this incomplete care.

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Surprisingly common



“It is a very rare event when I do not see one dental complaint during a (12-hour) shift.”

— ER physician in Louisiana



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States feel the impact



WA: A study found that a trip to the ER was the first “dental visit” for 1 in 4 children.

NY: The average charge per ER dental visit for young children rose 30% in five years.

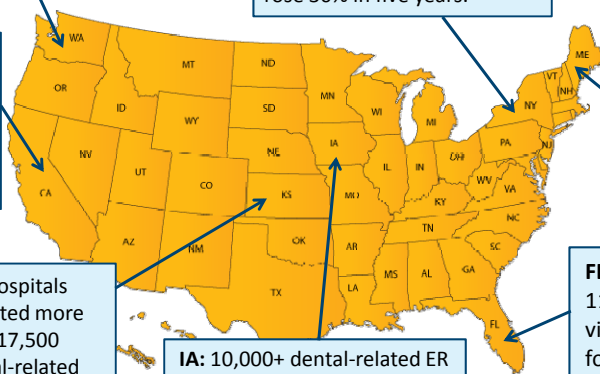
ME: Dental disease was the leading reason for ER visits by Medicaid enrollees and uninsured young people.

CA: In 2007, 83,000+ visits were due to preventable dental problems.

KS: Hospitals reported more than 17,500 dental-related ER visits in 2010.

IA: 10,000+ dental-related ER visits cost taxpayers almost \$5 million in 2007.

FL: There were 115,000+ ER visits in 2010 for dental problems.



Driving up Medicaid costs



- **Florida:** The number of Medicaid enrollees seeking ER care for toothaches or other dental problems jumped **40%** over a two-year period.
- **Oregon:** The number of dental-related visits to hospital ERs climbed **31%** in a two-year stretch.
- **South Carolina:** In 2009, nearly 3 of every 4 ER trips for dental problems were made by Medicaid recipients or the uninsured.



Factors Driving the Problem

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A perfect storm



- 100 million+ Americans lack dental coverage
- Investments in prevention do not meet the need
- Medicaid funding leaves big gaps in coverage
- The dental workforce isn't large enough to meet the nation's needs

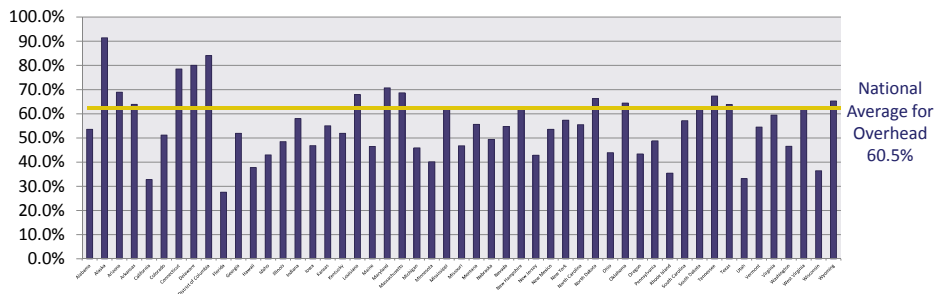
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db40.pdf>

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State Medicaid rates for dental care

- Most states pay less than it costs to provide dental care
- Most dentists don't participate in Medicaid



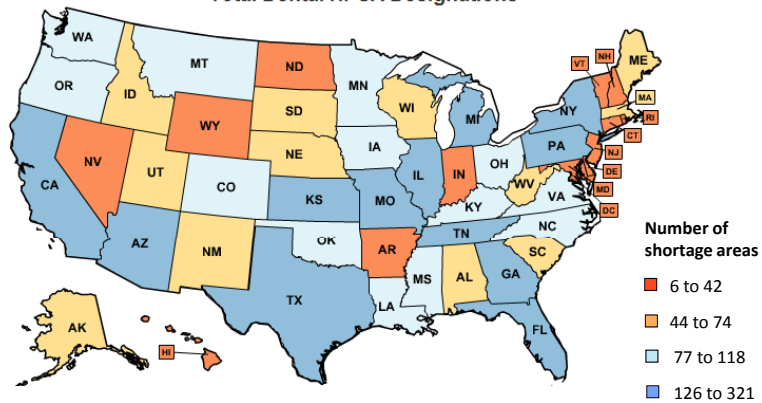
Source: Pew Center on the States (2011) Making Coverage Matter.

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A major, national shortage of dentists

Nearly 48 million Americans live in a shortage area

Total Dental HPSA Designations



Source: Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) Statistics. February 2012 data obtained at: http://ars.hrsa.gov/ReportServer/ReportServer?Report=SCD_HPSA%20-%20HPSA_SCP%20_SummaryFormat-HTML3.2.

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Troubling signs ahead



Ages of private-practice dentists in the U.S.



- *In 2013, more dentists will be retiring than graduating.*
- *This trend will peak in 2023, with a net loss of **1,706** dentists nationwide.*

Source: Institute of Medicine, July 2011 report.; estimates by Northeast Delta Dental (2010). www.pewcenteronthestates.com

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Policy Solutions

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1. Focus on prevention



- ✓ **Dental sealants** are clear, plastic coatings that are painted onto children's molars, which are the most cavity-prone teeth.
- ✓ Sealants are usually applied when molars first appear in the mouth — at age 6-7 and also at age 12-13.
- ✓ Sealants prevent 60% of decay at one-third the cost of a filling.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/factsheets/sealants_faq.htm

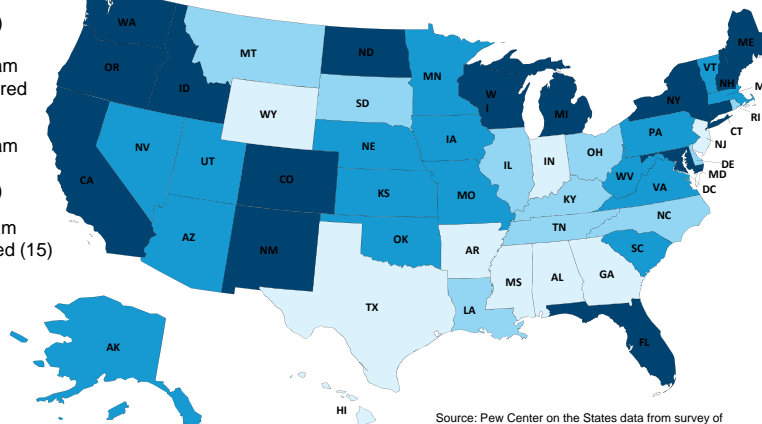
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1. Focus on prevention

- Dentist's exam and direct or indirect supervision required (10)
- Dentist's exam always required (10)
- Dentist's exam sometimes required (16)
- Dentist's exam never required (15)

Current State Rules – Requirements Before Sealants Can Be Placed



Source: Pew Center on the States data from survey of state oral health programs and state boards of dentistry, 2011-2012.

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1. Focus on prevention

- ✓ **Water fluoridation** is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dental Association and other leading medical organizations.
- ✓ Fluoridated water reduces the decay rate by 25%.
- ✓ Every \$1 invested in fluoridation saves \$38 by avoiding the need for fillings or other dental treatments.



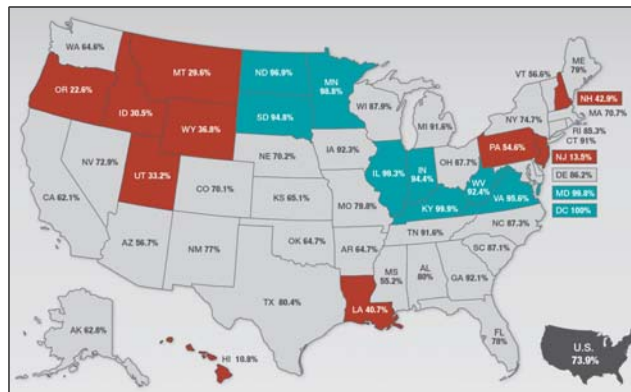
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/fluoridation

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1. Focus on prevention

Fluoridated Water: Highest 10 ■ Lowest 10 ■

72 million Americans don't receive fluoridated water.



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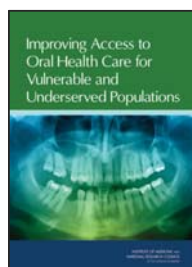
2. Focus on dental workforce



- Expanding the scope of procedures that hygienists or other existing practitioners can perform
- Training and licensing new types of dental professionals, such as dental therapists

*Dental therapists practice in two states — **Alaska** and **Minnesota** — and in more than 50 countries (including Canada, Great Britain and Australia)*

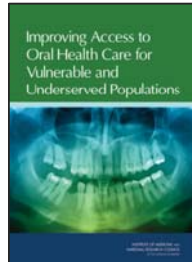
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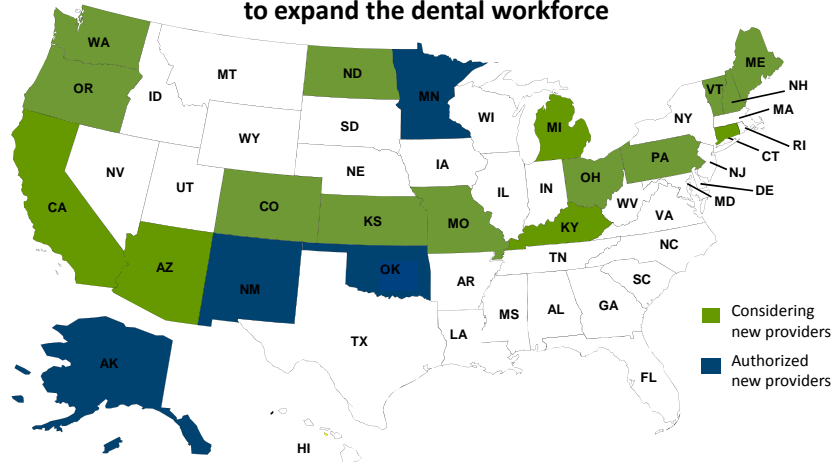


Dr. David Nash, Univ. of Kentucky Dental Professor (2012):

“There is no question that dental therapists provide care for children that is high quality and safe. None of the 1,100 documents reviewed found any evidence of compromises to children's safety or quality of care.”

2. Focus on dental workforce

States that are exploring new ways to expand the dental workforce



The News-Times

MARCH 23, 2012

Hundreds Line Up for Free Dental Clinic

DANBURY -- Jeanne Burns was standing in line outside the Connecticut Mission of Mercy free dental clinic at Western Connecticut State University, book in hand.

It was about 11 a.m. Friday, and it was Burns' second go-round at the clinic's line.

"I got here at 2:30 a.m. and they'll only do one procedure at a time," Burns, of Danbury, said.

So after the volunteer dentists pulled one of her teeth, Burns waited a bit, then got back in line.



"I have no dental insurance, no health insurance and I've been under-employed for six years," she said, explaining her need to be there.

The need at the clinic -- held at the O'Neill Center at WestConn's Westside campus -- was obvious Friday.

Source: Denverpost.com, http://www.denverpost.com/news/id_13320334, accessed 4/6/2011. www.pewcenteronthestates.com

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