



Healthy Living Initiatives Trends in Children's Oral Health

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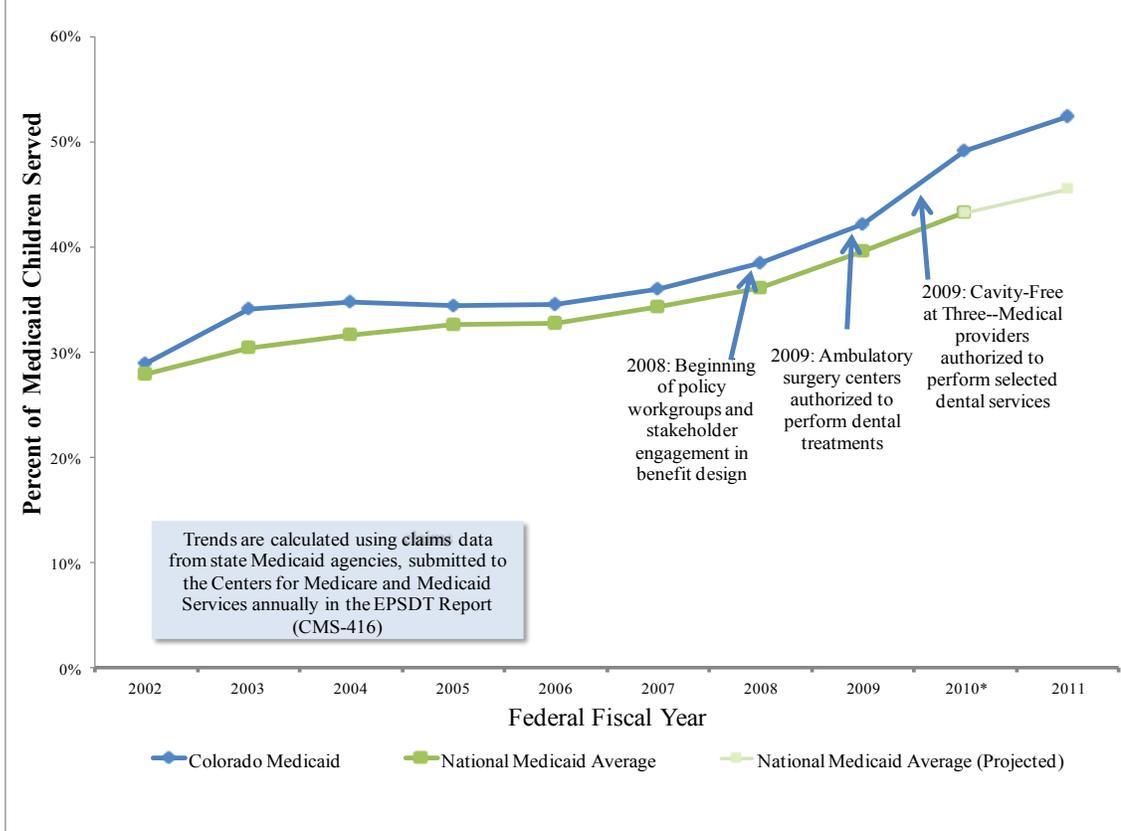
The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing is committed to improving the health of our clients and communities. This focus on healthy living extends from healthy development during infancy and childhood through the life span to healthy aging.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to compare trends in the use of dental services within the Colorado Medicaid population (ages 0-20) to national Medicaid averages.

For important information on Colorado's efforts to improve oral health among children, visit www.cavityfreeatthree.org.

There has been a steady, consistent increase of over 2.5% per year for the last four years in Medicaid children receiving any dental service. The Department has seen a similar increase in dental provider enrollment and outreach, which increased needed access for clients. In addition, medical providers have been educated to screen and refer children for necessary dental services. There is still significant work to be done, since only half of all eligible children are receiving dental care. The Department will continue to work on internal and external statewide initiatives for continued outreach to both dental providers and clients.

Comparing Trends: Children Receiving Dental Services in the Medicaid Program



Visit the Healthy Living Web page at: colorado.gov/hcpf

- ⇒ Wellness messages for Medicaid clients
- ⇒ Tool kits for providers with information on billing and reimbursement
- ⇒ Metrics for tracking population health

Oral Health for Children on Medicaid in Colorado:

- Recent data shows that 52% of children in the Colorado Medicaid program received a dental service in the past year
- Nationally, an average of 43% of children in the Medicaid program received a dental service in the past year.

Source: EPSDT CMS 416 data report to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

* In 2010, CMS made significant changes to the calculation of this measure

Health Disparities: According to the Pew Center on the States, causes of deteriorating dental health among low-income children can be attributed to a lack of access to dental services: "Broad, systemic factors play a significant role, and three in particular are at work: 1) too few children have access to proven preventive measures, including sealants and fluoridation; 2) too few dentists are willing to treat Medicaid-enrolled children; and 3) in some communities, there are simply not enough dentists to provide care." Pew Charitable Trusts, *The Cost of Delay*, 2010.



The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing

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