

# The State of Children's Dental Health: Making Coverage Matter

## Arizona

# B

2011 GRADE

**Arizona** meets five of the eight policy benchmarks for improving children's dental health, which is one more than the state met in 2010. The state reports that its sealant programs reach more than one-quarter of its high-risk schools. But the dire fiscal situation may imperil Arizona's gains. Although the state still meets the benchmark for Medicaid payments to dentists as a percentage of dentists' median retail fees, rates have fallen by 7 percent—failing to keep up with dental inflation. This situation will worsen because the state's Medicaid program has cut reimbursements for dental services by 5 percent.<sup>1</sup> Arizona also cut coverage for emergency dental procedures for adults in 2011.<sup>2</sup>

### HOW WELL IS ARIZONA RESPONDING?

2011: **B**

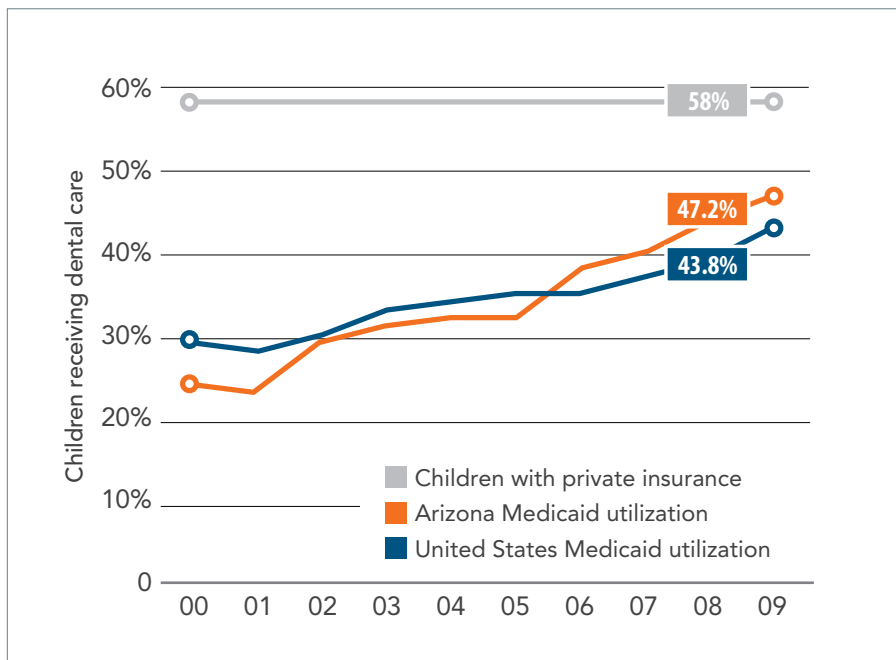
2010: **C**

DATA YEAR	MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARKS FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES	STATE	NATIONAL	MEETS OR EXCEEDS	MET OR EXCEEDED
2010	Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs	25-49%	25%	✓	
2010	Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam	YES	YES	✓	✓
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	52.3%	75%		
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	47.2%	38.1%	✓	✓
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	68.9%	60.5%	✓	✓
2010	Pays medical providers for early preventive dental health care	NO	YES		
2010	Authorizes new primary care dental providers	NO	YES		
2010	Tracks data on children's dental health	YES	YES	✓	✓
<b>Total score</b>				<b>5 of 8</b>	<b>4 of 8</b>

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

## 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 2009.



SOURCE: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416.

SOURCES FOR BENCHMARKS: (1, 2, 7) Pew Center on the States survey of states; (3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; (4) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416; (5, 6) Medicaid/SCHIP Dental Association and American Academy of Pediatrics; (8) National Oral Health Surveillance System.

1. "AHCCCS April 1, 2011 Provider Rate Reductions," November 22, 2010; [http://www.azahcccs.gov/reporting/Downloads/Legislation/2010seventh/ProvRate\\_FactSheet.pdf](http://www.azahcccs.gov/reporting/Downloads/Legislation/2010seventh/ProvRate_FactSheet.pdf), (accessed December 6, 2010)

2. K. Sack, "Arizona's Medicaid Cuts Seen as a Sign of the Financial Times," The New York Times, December 5, 2010. [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/05/us/05transplant.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=Arizona's%20Medicaid%20Cuts%20Are%20Seen%20as%20a%20Sign%20of%20the%20Financial%20Times&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/05/us/05transplant.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Arizona's%20Medicaid%20Cuts%20Are%20Seen%20as%20a%20Sign%20of%20the%20Financial%20Times&st=cse), (accessed February 7, 2011).