

Dental Care

Definition

Dental services is the number and percent of Kentucky children enrolled in Medicaid or the Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program (KCHIP) who received any dental care.

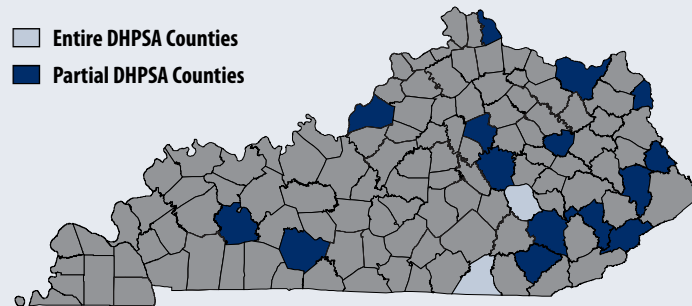
Data in context

Adequate oral health is a proven necessity in a child's overall well-being. Poor oral health negatively affects a child's ability to learn and play, and leads to lower school performance and attendance.¹ Poor oral health as a child can also turn into serious health outcomes in adulthood, resulting in a higher risk of stroke, heart disease and preterm, low-weight births.² Tooth decay affects nearly 6 in 10 children nationally, and 25 percent of children live with untreated decay in their permanent teeth.³

Barriers to obtaining dental care disproportionately affect low-income children and children of color, who are less likely to have health insurance or to have had a recent dental visit, and are more likely to have untreated tooth decay.⁴ Medicaid has increased access to health care services for low-income children, yet relatively few enrolled children obtain dental services.⁵ Too few dentists accept Medicaid due to low reimbursement rates, making it difficult to find a participating provider.⁶ In Kentucky, children of color covered by Medicaid or KCHIP were less likely to have accessed dental care in 2007; African-American children in Kentucky represented 14 percent of the Medicaid/KCHIP population but only 10 percent of children receiving dental services.⁷

Kentucky expanded Medicaid benefits for children in 2006 to include two cleanings per year instead of one. While reimbursement rates remain relatively low, Kentucky also issued a moderate increase for dentists serving the Medicaid and KCHIP populations, and physicians and primary care centers are now reimbursed for applying fluoride varnish to Medicaid-eligible children up to age four. Reimbursement rate increases in other states have improved provider enrollment and patient utilization of services, though Kentucky's impact has not yet been determined.⁸

Kentucky Dental Health Profession Shortage Areas, December 2006



Source: University of Louisville Health Sciences Center, Kentucky Dental Provider Workforce Analysis: 1998-2006.

Most recently, the General Assembly passed legislation to require dental examinations or screenings for children entering kindergarten in public schools.

The number of children receiving dental care through Medicaid or KCHIP increased by 12 percent from 2003 to 2007, yet a slightly smaller percentage of children accessed services (down to 41 percent from 42 percent) due to increased enrollment in those programs. The percent of enrolled children accessing dental services dropped in 29 counties, including Breckinridge, Grayson, Henry, Marion, Nelson, and Washington Counties where rates decreased by over 15 percentage points. The percent of KCHIP and Medicaid recipients who accessed dental care grew by more than 15 percentage points in Knox and Monroe Counties.

A number of issues contribute to the challenge of accessing dental services for Kentucky families. Several counties lack a sufficient number of dentists to serve the population, including Jackson and McCreary Counties, as well as parts of 15 other counties.⁹ Kentucky parents also report challenges in taking their children to the dentist during regular hours if they face transportation challenges or work in jobs without flexible work hours.¹⁰

To ensure access to adequate dental care, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends children have a "dental home" by 12 months of age.¹¹ Recommendations

to improve access to dental services for KCHIP and Medicaid recipients include increased promotion of provider participation, an expanded supply of dental care providers, improved dental benefits and data collection, and increased oral health education and patient support.¹²

Data Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, processed by Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

Data Note: Data refer to the total number of children receiving dental services, including the Passport region.

Rate Calculation: (number of children receiving KCHIP with a dental visit + number of children receiving Medicaid with a dental visit at any point in 2003) * 100 / (average monthly number of children enrolled in KCHIP and Medicaid in 2003)

(number of children receiving KCHIP with a dental visit + number of children receiving Medicaid with a dental visit at any point in 2007) * 100 / (average monthly number of children enrolled in KCHIP and Medicaid in 2007)

- 1 Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured (2008). *Filling An Urgent Need: Improving Children's Access To Dental Care In Medicaid and SCHIP*. Available at <http://www.kff.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured (2008). *Dental Coverage and Care for Low-Income Children: The Role of Medicaid and SCHIP*. Available at <http://www.kff.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Data obtained from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, August 2008.
- 8 National Academy for State Health Policy (2008). *The Effects of Medicaid Reimbursement Rates on Access to Dental Care*. Available at <http://www.nashp.org>. Accessed 2008.
- 9 Peterson, M., Williams, J., and Mundt, C. (2007). *Kentucky Dental Provider Workforce Analysis: 1998-2006*. University of Louisville, Health Sciences Center. Available at <http://chfs.ky.gov>. Accessed September 2008.
- 10 McNary, L. (2005). *Kentucky's Cavity: Parents Voice Concerns about Children's Dental Care in their Communities*. Kentucky Youth Advocates. Available at <http://www.kyouth.org>. Accessed September 2008.
- 11 American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (2004). *Policy on the Dental Home*. Available at <http://www.aapd.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 12 Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured (2008). *Filling An Urgent Need: Improving Children's Access To Dental Care In Medicaid and SCHIP*. Available at <http://www.kff.org>. Accessed August 2008.

Dental services for children enrolled in Medicaid and KCHIP (number who received dental services & percent of members utilizing dental services)

	2003		2007	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Kentucky	148,136	42	165,997	41
Adair	836	47	1,026	51
Allen	547	36	884	46
Anderson	423	43	605	47
Ballard	276	41	327	47
Barren	1,253	40	1,847	46
Bath	559	40	853	53
Bell	2,741	56	2,625	54
Boone	1,042	34	1,921	38
Bourbon	643	48	985	57
Boyd	2,093	47	2,523	53
Boyle	878	45	1,138	51
Bracken	295	41	375	42
Breathitt	1,271	46	1,315	50
Breckinridge	831	45	595	29
Bullitt	1,459	38	1,109	23
Butler	545	40	698	47
Caldwell	529	48	572	47
Calloway	837	39	1,153	48
Campbell	1,742	38	1,605	31
Carlisle	203	47	241	51
Carroll	244	30	207	20
Carter	1,617	45	1,928	50
Casey	981	54	1,169	55
Christian	1,963	34	2,099	32
Clark	1,225	46	1,796	53
Clay	1,653	40	2,085	53
Clinton	657	46	853	53
Crittident	323	45	339	43
Cumberland	433	50	408	45
Daviess	3,138	41	4,009	45
Edmonson	562	48	719	57
Elliott	539	49	548	52
Estill	909	47	1,103	53
Fayette	4,282	30	6,527	37
Fleming	571	43	721	47
Floyd	3,213	47	3,327	51
Franklin	1,007	37	1,389	42
Fulton	377	36	367	38
Gallatin	198	29	285	32
Garrard	566	44	766	52

	2003		2007	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Grant	604	28	1,198	42
Graves	1,333	41	1,795	46
Grayson	1,187	46	853	29
Green	460	46	516	46
Greenup	1,642	50	1,869	53
Hancock	238	44	315	46
Hardin	2,457	36	2,066	27
Harlan	2,687	49	2,519	51
Harrison	544	41	839	51
Hart	717	38	1,012	49
Henderson	1,459	42	1,845	44
Henry	465	40	316	23
Hickman	148	37	195	45
Hopkins	1,957	47	2,049	46
Jackson	499	25	683	34
Jefferson	18,742	35	13,122	21
Jessamine	1,299	45	1,906	49
Johnson	1,611	48	1,751	52
Kenton	3,031	33	4,043	36
Knott	1,422	51	1,339	55
Knox	2,668	50	3,752	66
LaRue	463	39	388	28
Laurel	3,147	47	3,994	54
Lawrence	1,080	46	1,077	46
Lee	527	43	569	47
Leslie	1,095	55	963	53
Letcher	1,593	44	1,634	48
Lewis	880	45	957	46
Lincoln	1,216	51	1,512	54
Livingston	323	45	305	41
Logan	1,049	44	1,209	47
Lyon	202	54	207	47
McCracken	2,113	39	2,504	44
McCreary	1,585	47	1,736	52
McLean	383	45	526	54
Madison	2,147	44	2,743	45
Magoffin	1,201	50	1,382	56
Marion	607	39	384	23
Marshall	795	42	1,173	51
Martin	1,138	48	1,083	51
Mason	664	41	745	41

	2003		2007	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Meade	749	42	601	28
Menifee	288	30	376	37
Mercer	592	42	915	51
Metcalfe	499	46	714	58
Monroe	549	41	799	58
Montgomery	1,032	45	1,416	52
Morgan	879	49	956	55
Muhlenberg	1,436	45	1,587	48
Nelson	1,191	42	869	25
Nicholas	307	44	451	53
Ohio	1,139	46	1,272	45
Oldham	425	34	435	23
Owen	379	41	504	47
Owsley	385	39	406	45
Pendleton	411	35	488	38
Perry	2,234	48	2,270	52
Pike	4,180	49	4,075	50
Powell	891	50	1,056	52
Pulaski	3,145	49	3,879	54
Robertson	91	41	106	45
Rockcastle	795	42	1,102	51
Rowan	810	42	1,145	52
Russell	911	45	1,105	50
Scott	772	34	1,320	43
Shelby	658	34	718	24
Simpson	591	46	637	40
Spencer	205	30	226	24
Taylor	832	39	919	39
Todd	461	40	567	42
Trigg	354	46	474	49
Trimble	311	43	255	29
Union	496	41	649	48
Warren	3,121	40	4,183	47
Washington	396	47	237	27
Wayne	1,272	45	1,501	51
Webster	441	38	581	45
Whitley	3,069	54	3,850	63
Wolfe	573	44	726	52
Woodford	427	42	511	39