The Emergency Room: A Costly Dental Destination

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Agenda

- Provide an overview of the Pew Children’s Dental Campaign
- Talk briefly about the national and state context of oral health access
- Discuss Pew’s ER Report
- Discuss factors that are driving the increase in ER utilization
- Discuss possible solutions to the problem
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.

National and State Context
In 2011, the Institute of Medicine produced a report on access to oral health care. The IOM identified the scope of this problem:

- In 2008, 4.6 million children did not obtain needed dental care because their families could not afford it.
- In 2011, there were approximately 33.3 million unserved individuals living in dental Health Professional Shortage Areas.
- In 2006, only 38 percent of retired individuals had dental coverage.

“Isn’t this just about a few cavities?”

The impact hits the military and business:

- **Military readiness**: In a 2008 study of the armed forces, 52 percent of new recruits were found to be Class 3 in “dental readiness”—meaning they had oral health problems that needed urgent attention and would delay overseas deployment.
- **The workplace**: Adults miss an estimated 164 million hours of work each year because of dental needs.
- **Driving up health care costs**: When dental needs are unmet, these problems often land in hospital ERs.
Making Coverage Matter
Pew’s 2011 Report on Dental Access

Michigan: Making Coverage Matter

HOW WELL IS MICHIGAN RESPONDING?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA YEAR</th>
<th>MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARKS FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>NATIONAL</th>
<th>MEETS OR EXCEEDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs</td>
<td>&lt;25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Hygienists can place sealants without dentist’s prior exam</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Share of dentists’ median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Pays medical providers for early preventive dental health care</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Authorizes new primary care dental providers</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Tracks data on children’s dental health</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total score: 4 of 8
“A Michigan Perspective

“Increasingly, research supports the connection between oral health and systemic health. Oral health complications exacerbate general health conditions.... Poor oral health results in school absences and inappropriate use of emergency rooms.”

--Michigan Governor Rick Snyder


Pew’s ER Report

www.pewcenteronthestates.com
Overview of Pew’s findings

• Preventable dental conditions were the primary diagnosis in 830,590 visits to hospital ERs nationwide in 2009 — a 16% increase from 2006.

• Children accounted for nearly 50,000 of these ER visits.

• Many ER visits are made by Medicaid enrollees or the uninsured.
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.

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

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

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

Disturbing trend: ER use for dental problems

In Florida, the number of Medicaid-enrolled residents who sought care at a hospital ER for dental reasons jumped 40 percent from the number two years earlier.*

The number of dental-related emergency visits by Oregon's Medicaid enrollees during this year was 31 percent higher than the number recorded two years before.*

**Costly, inadequate care**

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

Dr. Alan Sorkey, ER physician in Louisiana

$88 million **FL** More than 115,000 hospital ER visits for dental problems produced charges exceeding $88 million (2010).¹

$23 million **GA** The approximately 60,000 emergency hospital visits for non-traumatic dental problems or other oral health issues cost more than $23 million (2007).²

$5 million **IA** More than 10,000 visits to hospital ERs for dental reasons cost Medicaid or other public programs almost $5 million (2007).³

$4.7 million **MI** The 10,000-plus dental-related ER visits to seven hospitals in the state’s largest urban area cost more than $4.7 million (2005).⁴


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**The wrong care in the wrong place at the wrong time for desperate patients**

How did so many people with preventable dental conditions end up in a place like this?
Kyle Willis

- 24 year old man from Cincinnati
- He began to experience headaches and his face began to swell so he went to the ER
- ER doctor gave him a prescription for the antibiotic and the pain medication—he couldn’t afford the antibiotic so he chose the pain meds.
- The tooth infection spread to his brain and was the cause of his death last year.

Pew’s report strikes a cord

- Pew’s report on ER visits received more than 21 million media impressions.
- ABC World News cited Pew’s data in a dental story that aired on April 24.
- 32 of the 50 largest newspapers published stories about the ER problem.
Why is this happening?

A system that serves only 2/3 of the people

“If you live in the suburbs, if you have a car, plenty of money, dental insurance, and no dental disease, we have the perfect delivery system for you.”

- Charles Bertolami
  Dean, New York University
  College of Dentistry
The Tremendous Unmet Need

Total Population
281 Million

- Institutionalized
  4 Million

- Live in Community
  277 Million

- Generally Healthy
  253 Million

- Able to Pay
  210 Million

- Non-Remote
  199 Million

- Severe Medical Co-morbidities
  25 Million

- Generally Healthy

- Able to Pay

- Non-Remote

- Remote

- Remote

83 Million
Americans lack access
--according to the ADA

- Economically Disadvantaged
  43 Million

- Non-Remote

- Remote


Millions lack dental insurance

- As of 2009, an estimated 130 million U.S. adults and children lack dental coverage

- Approximately 70% of adults 65 and older lack any kind of dental coverage

Source: IOM report, 2011

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db40.pdf
Spotty adult Medicaid benefits

Not enough dentists participate in Medicaid

More than 16 million low-income kids went without seeing a dentist in 2009
States pay too little: Medicaid Rates for Dental

Most states pay less than it costs to provide dental care

States Medicaid Rates as a Percentage of dentists median retail fee, 2010


Huge shortage of dentists
6,600+ are needed to lessen shortages

What can we do about it?
Remove barriers to sealants

Prior Exam Requirements (2012)

- 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)

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

Expand the dental workforce

States that are exploring new ways to expand the dental workforce

- Considering new providers
- Authorized new providers
Raise rates, expand Medicaid coverage

State economies are turning around. Be next in line!

What’s the solution?

“By improving access, we can achieve both wellness and cost savings... Insufficient focus on prevention and early diagnosis results in high utilization of hospital emergency rooms. A number of steps can be taken to improve access.”

-- Michigan Governor Rick Snyder
What's the solution?

- Improve Access
- Invest in Prevention
- Adopt an innovative approach to your dental workforce
