Data Brief

The Oral Health of Ohioans and Their Access to Dental Care, 2011

Do Ohio's children have good oral health?

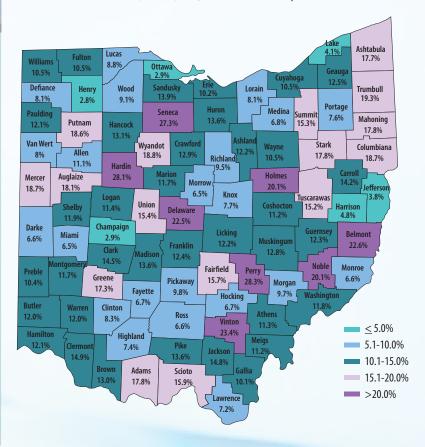
The answer is, "It depends."
Many children in Ohio are
enjoying improved oral health.
Results of the most recent oral
health survey of schoolchildren
show that, overall, fewer children
are experiencing cavities than in
the past (referred to as having



a "history of tooth decay"). Overall, 19 percent of Ohio's children were found to have untreated cavities, a decrease from 26 percent five years ago. The prevalence of dental sealants, the most effective means of preventing the type of tooth decay seen today among most children, has increased to 50 percent, up from 43 percent five years ago. Overall, about 80 percent of children reportedly had a dental visit during the past year.

However, disparities in the oral health of Ohio's children continue to exist depending on where they live, their families' income and whether they have dental insurance.

Percentage of Ohio Children (under age 18)
Who Have Never Visited a Dentist, 2008



Disparities in the Oral Health of Ohio's Children

- Children in Appalachian counties suffer from tooth decay at a 50 percent higher rate than children in other areas of Ohio.
- Children from low-income families (< 185 percent of poverty) are more than twice as likely to have untreated cavities and toothaches as those from middle- or upper-income families, and are less likely to have visited the dentist in the past year.
- Children covered by Medicaid are more likely to have untreated cavities and toothaches than those who are uninsured or covered by private insurance.
- Children in rural, non-Appalachian counties are less likely to have dental sealants

Children's Access to Dental Care

 Access to dental care remains the single most common unmet health care need for nearly 157,400 children in Ohio, regardless of family income.

- Almost 486,000 (19 percent) of Ohio's children are without dental insurance; this is four times the number of children without medical insurance.
- Almost 340,000 children in Ohio have never been to the dentist.

The Oral Health Status of Ohio's Adults

- About 45 percent of all adults in Ohio have had one or more permanent teeth removed due to tooth decay or gum disease.
- Black and multiracial adults and those living in Appalachia are more likely than White adults to have had one or more teeth removed.
- Nearly 37 percent of Ohio's poorest seniors (65 years of age and older with incomes less than \$15,000 per year) have had all their teeth removed.
- On average, three Ohioans are diagnosed with oral and pharyngeal cancer and one person dies from it every day.

Adult's Access to Dental Care

- Nearly 1.2 million working-age adults (18-64 years of age) report that they have dental needs that have not been met.
- More than 3.9 million
 Ohio adults (45 percent)
 over 18 years of age
 don't have dental



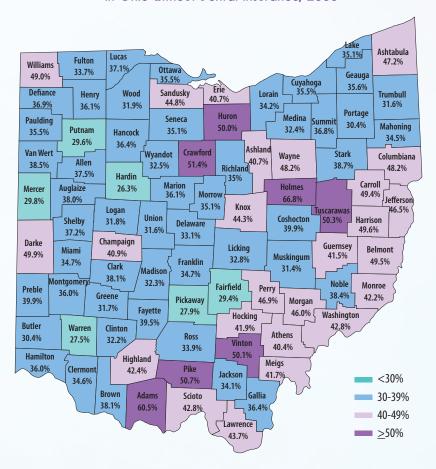
insurance, almost three times more than the number of Ohio adults without medical insurance.

 More than 964,000 seniors (60 percent) have no dental insurance. Most Medicare does not cover routine dental care.

The resources for providing dental care to Ohioans fall short of the need. Consider that....

- In 2009, 28 percent of Ohio dentists provided dental care to at least one Medicaid-eligible patient. However, only 12 percent of dentists provided care to a significant number of Medicaid-eligible patients (250 or more patients). Some Ohio counties do not have any dentists who provide care to Medicaideligible patients. In 2009, only 29 percent of Medicaid-eligible adults (19-64 years of age) and 22 percent of seniors went to the dentist.
- There are currently 68 dental health professional shortage areas in Ohio, designated by the federal government because there are not enough dentists to serve the needs of the people living there.
- Ohio's network of approximately 100 safety net dental clinics in 47 counties is a life-line for people who can not afford to get dental care in private dental offices. However, these programs are stretched to capacity with waiting lists for appointments that can be weeks or months long.
- For many Ohioans, hospital emergency rooms are the only place that they can get relief from their dental pain, a costly and ineffective option.

Percentage of Working-Age Adults in Ohio without Dental Insurance, 2008



Community-based Prevention Programs

Proven community-based programs to prevent tooth decay are vital to ensuring better oral health for Ohioans and are especially important for Ohio's most vulnerable residents. These programs include:

- Community water fluoridation: more than 92% of Ohioans on public water systems drink water that is optimally fluoridated.
- Dental sealants are being provided to more than 30,000 high-risk children through school-based sealant programs in 50 Ohio counties.



Ohio Department of Health Theodore E. Wymyslo, MD, Director Oral Health Section http://www.odh.ohio.gov

John R. Kasich, Governor

This summary provides the most recent information about oral diseases suffered by Ohioans and their access to dental care, based on data from the following sources: 2009-10 Statewide Oral Health Survey of 3rd Grade Schoolchildren; 2008 and 2010 Ohio Family Health Surveys; 2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; and the Ohio Cancer Incidence Surveillance System.