Access to Dental Care in Georgia

14.6% of children in Georgia did not have a dental care visit in the last 12 months.

MAJOR CHALLENGES FACING KIDS AND DENTISTS

Availability of Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dentists</th>
<th>Hygienists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 per 2,241 Georgians</td>
<td>1 per 1,599 Georgians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Georgia has 190 dental care shortage areas.*

*Federal regulations stipulate that in order to be considered as having a shortage of providers, a designation must have a population-to-provider ration that meets or exceeds 5,000 to 1 or 4,000 to 1 for areas with unusually high needs.

Transportation

On average, Medicaid and PeachCare beneficiaries have to travel 15 more miles for dental care than their non-Medicaid peers.

Medicaid Reimbursement for Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medicaid</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28% of Georgia dentists accept public insurance (Medicaid or PeachCare).

Language

Medicaid patients are required by federal law to have access to translation services arranged for and paid for by the provider.

38% of dental schools in the U.S. report that students were not adequately prepared to manage Limited English Proficient patients.

23% counties in Georgia have no dentists.

www.georgiavoices.org
BENEFITS OF IMPROVED DENTAL HEALTH

IMPROVED HEALTH OUTCOMES

Link between poor oral health and:
- Trouble eating and speaking
- Diabetes
- Pain
- Pre-term low birth weight

COST SAVINGS FOR KIDS, FAMILIES, AND THE STATE

- Reduction of future dental visits and related costs
- One study found that preventative dental care could save Georgia $51.1 million annually in Medicaid costs
- Reduction in emergency department visits for non-traumatic dental problems

IMPROVED EDUCATION AND LIFE OUTCOMES

- Improved attendance
- Improved academic performance
- Improved self-esteem and employability
- Reduced pain and suffering

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase dental workforce in shortage areas throughout Georgia by:
- Educating and raising awareness about the ability of dental hygienists practicing in settings such as schools and nursing homes

Incentivize and increase Medicaid acceptance rates among dentists by:
- Increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates for dental services like exams, cleanings, fluoride, sealants, and treatments of caries.
- Reducing administrative barriers that hinder dentists from accepting Medicaid.

Increase access to dental services through schools by:
- Leveraging comprehensive school-based health centers as a vehicle for providing dental care.

Sources: [https://tinyurl.com/DentalCare2019](https://tinyurl.com/DentalCare2019)