

FACTS AT A GLANCE

In 2005, the Georgia Third Grade Oral Health Survey (G3GOHS) was conducted at 57 elementary schools throughout the state using the national oral health survey designed by the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The preliminary data analysis of the survey of 2,236 third graders demonstrates the following results:



Dental disease puts our children at-risk for expensive chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and respiratory infections. Evidence-based studies indicate preventive oral health care is not only cost-effective, but also saves children from pain and lost days of school.

Preliminary analysis of the G3GOHS data indicate that:

- 1. Georgia has not yet reached the national Healthy People (HP) 2010 goals for Oral Health Status for children. Among states that have completed the Basic Screening Survey, Georgia ranks at the midpoint for dental decay and sealants.**
 - 40% of Georgia third grade children have sealants compared to the HP 2010 goal of 50%.
 - 56% of Georgia third grade children have cavities and/or fillings compared to the HP 2010 goal of 42%.
 - 27% of Georgia third graders have untreated dental decay compared to the HP 2010 goal of 21%.
- 2. Low-income children (eligible for free and reduced lunch program) in Georgia have lower oral health status and are less likely to receive oral health services.**
 - 61% low-income Georgia third graders have decay experience compared to 51% of third graders not eligible for free and reduced lunch program.
 - 33% of low-income Georgia third graders have untreated decay compared to 20% for higher income third graders.
 - 35% of low-income Georgia third graders have sealants compared to 44% among higher income third graders.
 - 34% of low-income Georgia children need treatment compared to 18% for higher income third graders.

ORAL HEALTH STATUS OF GEORGIA'S CHILDREN

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The Georgia Health Policy Center's latest findings indicate that Public Health Oral Health Programs, Medicaid, and PeachCare for Kids are important resources for meeting the oral health needs of Georgia's low-income population.



Preventive dental services reduce serious and costly dental problems. A study reported in Pediatric Dentistry examining Medicaid expenditures for dental services indicates that dental conditions requiring hospital stays are ten times more expensive (\$6,498) than preventive treatment (\$660).

- Statewide, 35.8% of all publicly insured Georgia children (Medicaid, 31.4%/PeachCare, 48.8%) received “any dental service” during calendar year 2003. This falls short of the Healthy People 2010 Oral Health objective of 56%.
- Statewide, 10.9% of all publicly insured Georgia children (Medicaid, 9.5%/PeachCare, 14.2%) received “restorative services” during calendar year 2003.
- Statewide, 32.9% of all publicly insured Georgia children (Medicaid 28.5%/PeachCare 45.5%) received “preventive services” during calendar year 2003. This falls short of the Healthy People 2010 Oral Health Objective of 57%.
- Of 3,798 Georgia dentists *licensed and residing* in Georgia during calendar year 2003, a total of 2,372 were listed as Medicaid/ PeachCare providers; of these 924 (24.3%) were considered as “Active” providers of care, having seen an average of one child per week.

The GOHPP targets its services to schools with high numbers of children eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program (FRLP). Approximately 42% of children enrolled in Pre-K through 6th grade were eligible for the FRLP during the 2002-2003 school year .

- 7.7% of Georgia children screened during FY2004 needed urgent/emergency dental care.
- 19.1% of Georgia children screened during FY2004 needed to see a dentist for observed dental problems (“early dental care needed”).
- The GOHPP provided 83,027 clinical dental visits and 240,654 dental treatment procedures in FY2004.