

Ambulatory Care Sensitive oral health conditions (ACS) are those considered to be largely avoidable with adequate prevention and primary care. The high numbers of hospital emergency department pediatric visits by Medicaid and uninsured patients may indicate a lack of access to or utilization of primary dental care as well as the need to provide parents and caregivers with information about proper dental hygiene, practices that contribute to tooth decay (such as putting a baby to bed with a bottle) and the importance of preventive dental visits during pregnancy, during the first few years of life and throughout the life span.

Floridians absorb the cost of Medicaid and uninsured ED visits through higher health insurance premiums and health care costs, increased tax dollars to support the state's Medicaid costs, local public hospitals and lost productivity. Policy solutions that are designed to improve dental care for Medicaid-eligible children will most likely result in a reduced number of pediatric visits to the emergency department.

Total Pediatric Visits and Charges by Payor: Birth-18			
	Visits	Charges	Avg. Charge
Medicaid/Managed	12,066	\$10,462,862	\$867
Self Pay	2,185	\$1,753,906	\$803
Commercial Health Insurance	1,768	\$1,878,686	\$1,063
Kidcare	302	\$301,289	\$998
TriCare or Other Federal	234	\$199,927	\$854
Other State & Local	110	\$123,899	\$1,126
Non-Payment (Charity)	93	\$81,788	\$879
Medicare/Managed	72	\$48,322	\$671
Other	44	\$37,155	\$844
Grand Total	16,874	\$14,887,834	\$882

Visits and Charges by Age			
	Visits	Charges	Avg. Charge
0-1	1,040	\$745,303	\$717
1	1,876	\$1,474,665	\$786
2	1,438	\$1,184,170	\$823
3	921	\$762,098	\$827
4	940	\$821,646	\$874
5	1,019	\$820,970	\$806
6	1,037	\$932,988	\$900
7	796	\$698,796	\$878
8	677	\$619,181	\$915
9	582	\$503,016	\$864
10	514	\$450,056	\$876
11	445	\$395,418	\$889
12	448	\$413,827	\$924
13	506	\$490,711	\$970
14	504	\$458,930	\$911
15	628	\$659,464	\$1,050
16	799	\$862,195	\$1,079
17	983	\$960,700	\$977
18	1,721	\$1,633,700	\$949

Policy Solutions

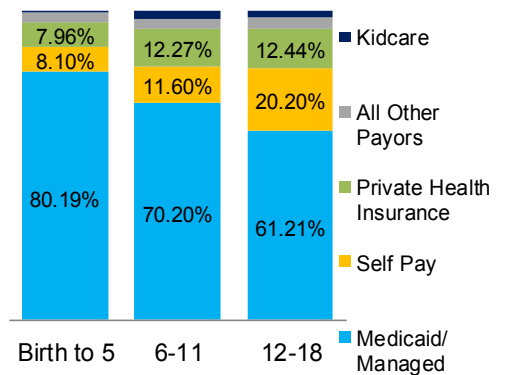
Effective policies for decreasing pediatric emergency department utilization for preventable oral health conditions include:

- School-based sealant programs (S-BSPs)
- Community water fluoridation
- Fluoride varnish programs for at-risk children
- Including oral health education in perinatal guidelines to stress transmission of bacteria from parent to child

Methodology

Ambulatory care sensitive dental conditions (ACS) i.e. "preventable conditions" used in this study are based on the ICD-9 (International Classification of Diseases, 9th Edition) codes from the published work of Dr. John Billings (http://wagner.nyu.edu/files/admissions/acs_codes.pdf) and include all primary diagnoses or reason for ED visit within the categories 521—523, 525 and 528. This methodology is referenced on the website of the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality as a tool for monitoring the health care safety net and is cited on the Florida Department of Health CHARTS website.

Percentage of Visits by Payor



Top Five Reasons for Oral Health Related Visits by Infants and Toddlers (< 2 Years Old)

	Visits	Charges
528.9 - Other and unspecified diseases of the	1,244	\$ 896,823
780.6 - Fever, unspecified	646	\$ 627,232
528 - Stomatitis and mucositis, unspecified	185	\$ 105,298
525.9 - Unspecified disorder of the teeth and supporting structures	174	\$ 99,898
523.1 - Chronic gingivitis, plaque induced	76	\$ 49,953

Though more research is necessary, the data suggests that parents and caregivers may not recognize the need for dental care for very young children and may not recognize that the underlying reason for the child's illness is oral health related.

Top Five Primary Diagnoses for Oral Health Related Visits by Infants and Toddlers (< 2 Years Old)

	Visits	Charges
528 - Stomatitis and mucositis, unspecified	895	\$ 713,696
112 - Candidiasis of mouth	403	\$ 268,130
523.1 - Chronic gingivitis, plaque induced	390	\$ 322,583
528.9 - Other and unspecified diseases of the oral soft tissues	153	\$ 98,207
528.2 - Oral aphthae (ulcer)	148	\$ 101,563

The second-most common diagnosis for very young children whose parents or caregivers are seeking emergency room care for what appears to them to be a dental-related condition is thrush, a yeast infection of the mouth. More research is needed but this suggests the family lacks access to a primary care provider.