BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

- 51.7 million school hours are missed annually due to a dental condition (Griffin et al., 2014).
- School-based dental services (SBDS) are some of the most effective ways to promote oral health and increase access for children.
- SBDS services include: sealant application, fluoride treatment, cleanings, and diagnostic.
- SBDS can reduce the number of missed school days for these children by providing preventive dental services and care coordination on-site.
- For some students, SBDS are the first encounter with a dental provider. For others, SBDS are their only source of dental care.
- SBDS act as a gateway for future oral health care.
- Using claims data, this study examines the impact of SBDS among children aged 0 – 20.

STUDY DESIGN

- Administrative claims data from the IBM Watson MarketScan Medicaid Database for all SBDS offered in 13 states from 2013 to 2015 were analyzed.
- Descriptive analyses identified specific dental services provided, as well as the number of children who received dental care prior to, during, and after SBDS.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

- 13,507 Medicaid-enrolled children received a dental service in a school-based setting during the study period.
- Consistent with prior literature, sealants and fluoride treatment remain the most prevalent services for all age groups.
- 92% of 0 – 5 year old children received a fluoride treatment with a second peak in children 15 and older (87%).
- Those aged 15 or older also received the most diagnostic services (88%).
- Of all age groups, older children (15+) received the most preventive services (91%).
- Among children continuously enrolled and who received SBDS in 2014, 50% had no dental care before receiving SBDS.
- 36% of those children with no prior dental care then went on to receive dental care in an office setting.
- The most common dental procedures provided in the first office visit were preventive and diagnostic services (excluding radiology).

CONCLUSIONS

- SBDS are a unique opportunity to foster person-centered care by providing dental services to children who otherwise may not receive such services.
- These visits also demonstrate the importance of dental services early in life for these children.
- These visits not only introduce dental services, but also communicate the importance of maintaining regular health care contact and treatment.
- Coordinating care for these children enables linkage to other community resources and often serve as the only access point for healthcare.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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REFERENCES