

INSIDE I-SMILE

2023 Update on Children's Oral Health

The I-Smile initiative connects Iowa children and families with dental, medical, and community resources to ensure a lifetime of health and wellness. Good oral health allows children to eat well, grow and thrive, concentrate on learning, feel good about their appearance, and improve social interactions. This contributes to overall well-being and reduces future dental and medical costs.



CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH IN IOWA

57,529

children received assistance from I-Smile for dental care in SFY23; more than 9,000 had specific personalized help for their dental needs

18%

of children receiving an oral screening from I-Smile in SFY23 had active tooth decay

75%

of children receiving I-Smile services are on Medicaid or Hawki or pay for dental care out-of-pocket

SFY23 I-Smile program data

I-SMILE SUCCESS

In the past 3 years, the I-Smile program has started using silver diamine fluoride (SDF) as a simple and quick way to stop the tooth decay process for children identified with a cavity. SDF not only stops the decay process, but it also helps prevent future decay, making it particularly beneficial for at-risk children who may have more difficulty getting to a dentist for care.

I-Smile Coordinators and other public health dental hygienists working in I-Smile have been trained to apply SDF to cavities of at-risk children across the state. In the past 3 years, nearly 200 children ages 0-12 have benefited from an SDF application from the I-Smile program.

SFY23 I-Smile program data

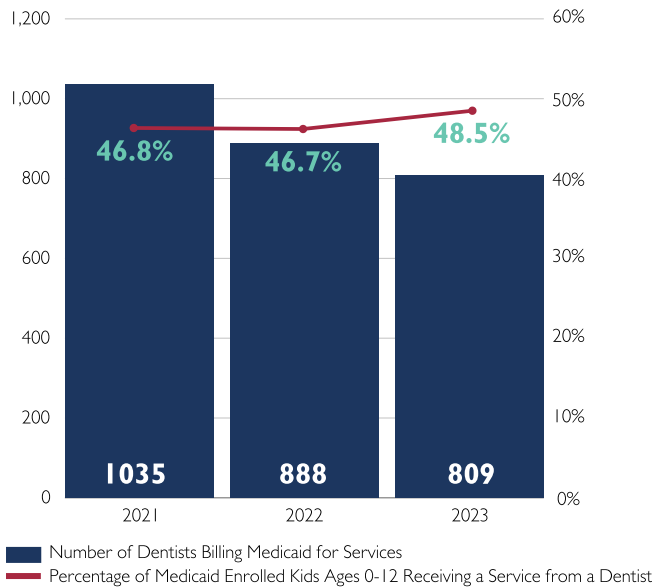


**Health and
Human Services**

Division of Community Access
Wellness & Preventive Health
Oral Health Section
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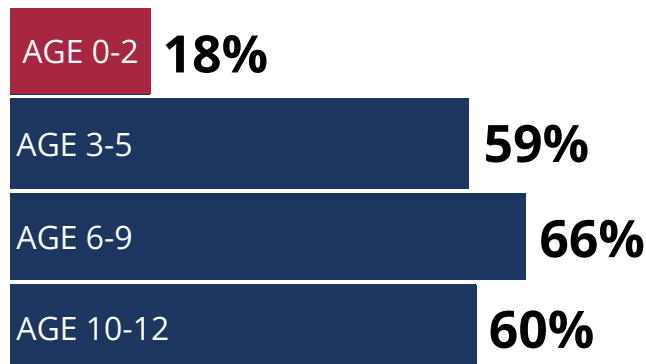
Percentage of Medicaid Enrolled Kids Receiving a Service from a Dentist Remains Stable Despite a Decrease in the Number of Dentists Billing Medicaid



Although there were 79 fewer dentists who saw a Medicaid-enrolled child in SFY23, the percentage of children ages 3-12 receiving services from a dentist remains strong. Dentists who provide care for Medicaid-enrolled families are seeing more of them, and the care coordination and referral assistance provided through I-Smile likely contributes to keeping access rates stable.

SFY23 Iowa Medicaid Paid Claims

Percent of Medicaid-enrolled Children Receiving a Service from a Dentist in SFY23



SFY23 Iowa Medicaid Paid Claims

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I-Smile began in 2006. The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services administers I-Smile through contracts with 15 public and private non-profit organizations as part of the statewide Maternal and Child Health program. The contractors each employ a dental hygienist who serves as the local I-Smile Coordinator. Coordinators focus on preventing dental disease, identifying ways to help families address challenges so that underserved children may receive care from dentists, and promoting the importance of oral health within their communities through:

- Developing relationships with dental offices to improve access to appointments for children;
- Assisting families with scheduling dental appointments and linking to needed community resources;
- Increasing awareness about oral health through partnerships with businesses, organizations, and schools;
- Participating in community events and meetings, incorporating oral health within health and social initiatives;
- Addressing oral health issues through partnerships with local boards of health;
- Training medical office staff to provide oral screenings and fluoride applications for children at well-child visits;
- Educating parents, children, and the public about oral health and preventing cavities; and
- Assuring that children have access to preventive care such as oral screenings and fluoride applications.

