

Hennepin County
Public Health
Assessment Team

Oral health among children

FACT SHEET



Why is this indicator important?

Oral and dental health is an indicator of overall health, important to general health and well-being. Oral health problems are often painful, costly, and result in diminished quality of life for those suffering.

The 2010 Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health was the first of its kind and highlighted dramatic improvements in the nation's oral and dental health over the past century. However, the report also addressed the inequities and disparities in oral and dental health gains. Healthy People 2010 and Healthy People 2020 include goals for improved oral and dental health as part of an overall plan for the prevention of disease and promotion of health across the nation.

Coverage for dental care may increase the likelihood that children are seen regularly for dental care visits. Regular visits to a dentist or oral hygienist are important for monitoring healthy development, and for preventing cavities, gum disease or other serious oral health conditions.

What is the current status?

While children in Hennepin County have high rates of dental coverage and annual dental care, children from low income households are both less likely to have dental coverage and are much less likely to have had an annual dental visit in the past year. In addition, younger children were less likely to have seen a dentist in the past year.



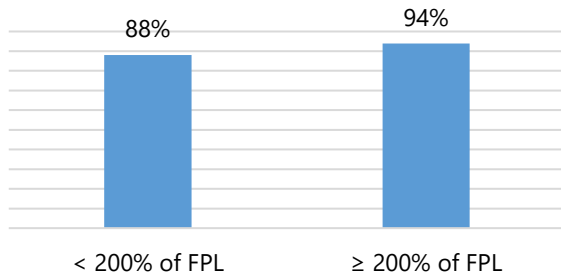
Hennepin County
Public Health

For more information on the health of Hennepin County residents, visit: www.Hennepin.us/PublicHealthData or email: PublicHealthData@hennepin.us

What are the disparities?

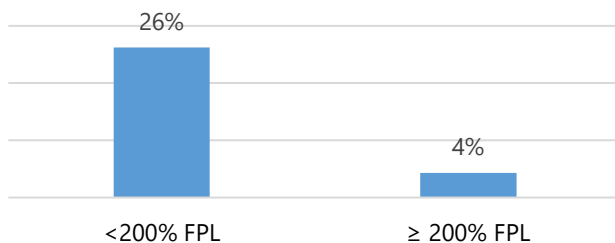
Most children in Hennepin County have dental coverage. However, fewer children from low income households have coverage. In addition, parents reported that children from low income households had difficulty finding a dentist who would accept the child's dental coverage. Children in Minneapolis are also more likely to have difficulty finding a provider who accepts their insurance (13% Minneapolis vs 8% suburban Hennepin County)

Figure 2. Percentage of children with dental coverage by income, 2015



Children living in low income households were much more likely to have difficulty finding a dentist to accept their insurance compared to not low income children.

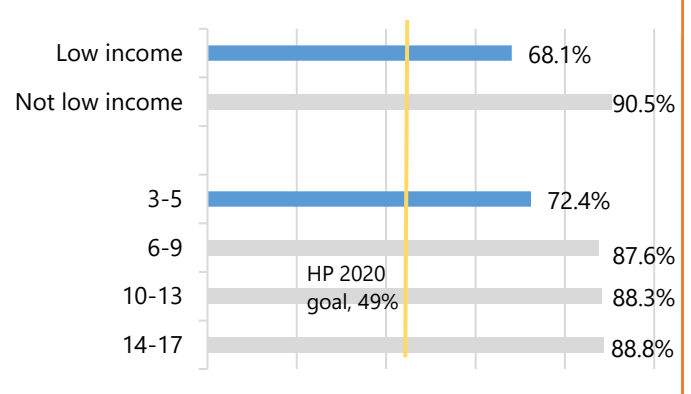
Figure 3. Percentage of insured children having difficulty finding a dentist by income, 2015



How do we compare?

Most children age 3 to 17 see a dentist at least annually. Eighty-five percent of children in Hennepin County saw a dentist in the last year, far exceeding the Healthy People 2020 goal of 49 percent of children having an annual dental visit. However, children from low income households and younger children (age 3 to 5) were less likely to have seen a dentist in the past year.

Figure 4. Percent of children who saw dentist in past year, 2015



The data shown in this fact sheet come from the Child SHAPE 2015 survey for Hennepin County. The questions included the following:

- *When was the last time the child saw a dentist for a regular check-up or other dental work? During the last year; between 1 and 2 years ago; more than 2 years ago; never.*
- *Does your child currently have any insurance that pays for all or part of his or her dental care? Yes; No.*
- *Have you ever had difficulty finding a dentist that would accept your child's dental insurance? Yes; No; Unsure; My child doesn't have dental insurance.*