

# SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

SUCCESSFULLY REDUCING DENTAL ACCESS DISPARITIES\*

## MEDICAID CHILDREN FOUND TO BE UNDERSERVED



**In 1999, 71%** of children enrolled in HUSKY A, a Medicaid program, **received no dental visit.**



**In 2000, a lawsuit** determined the primary factors to be **low reimbursement levels & cumbersome program administration.**

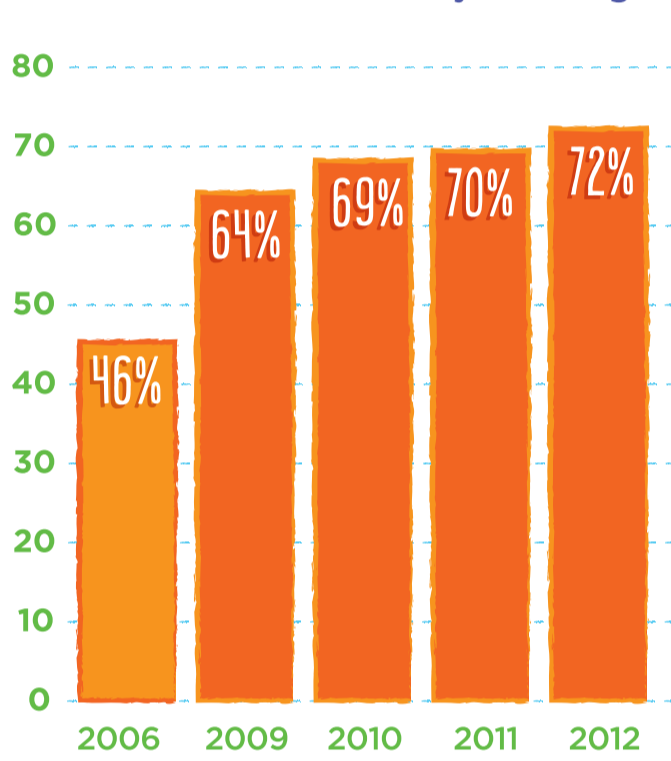
## REIMBURSEMENT RATES IMPROVED AFTER THE LAWSUIT SETTLEMENT



As part of the agreement in 2008, reimbursement rates increased to about the 70th percentile of 2005 market fees. The administration of Medicaid dental was also simplified.

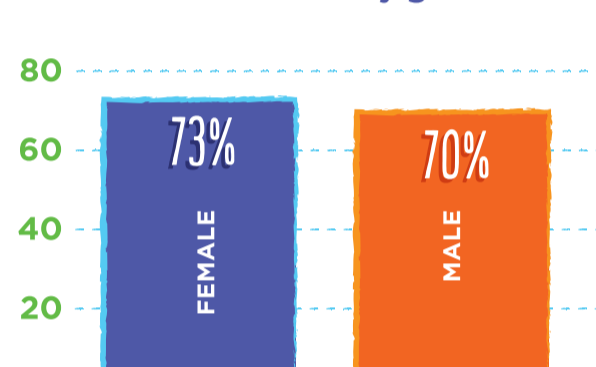
## IMPACTS OF THE CHANGES

Utilization rates of continuously-enrolled Medicaid children under 21 years of age

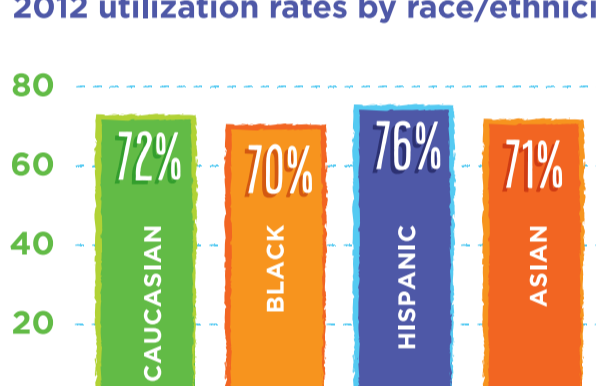


The 2012 utilization rate for Medicaid children is higher than the national average for privately insured children, which is 65%.\* In Connecticut, the percentage of privately insured children under the age of 21 who had a dental visit is 68%.

2012 utilization rates by gender



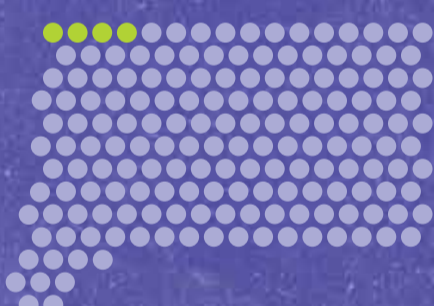
2012 utilization rates by race/ethnicity



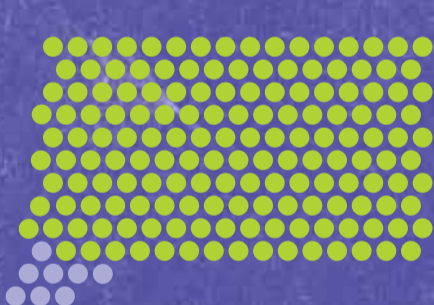
More children utilize dental services every year, regardless of age, gender, & race/ethnicity.



## FINDINGS:

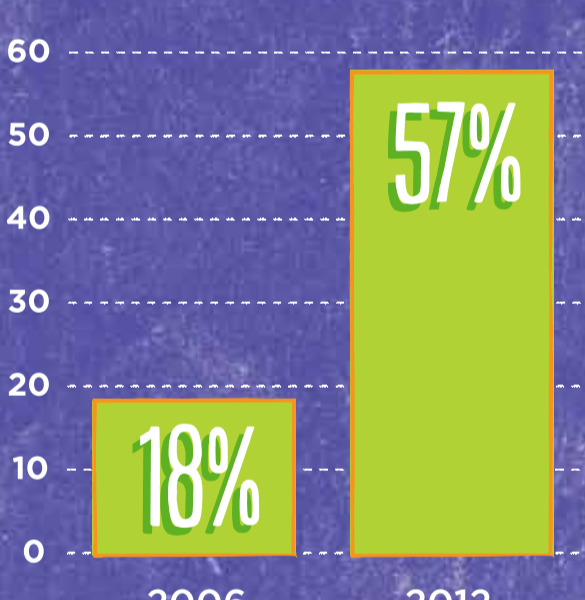


In 2006, only four Connecticut townships had a utilization rate of more than 60%.



By 2012, 156 of 169 of townships had dental utilization rates of 60% or greater.

UTILIZATION RATE FOR TWO-YEAR-OLDS



DENTIST PARTICIPATION



## WHAT CAN WE TAKE AWAY FROM THIS?



Children's access to dental care is linked to robust private provider participation in the Medicaid program and a strong dental safety net system.

## HOW CAN WE MAKE SURE LOW-INCOME CHILDREN CONTINUE TO RECEIVE EQUITABLE CARE?



Medicaid reimbursement rates should be adjusted periodically to mirror private insurance rates.



The administrative structure and processes of the Medicaid dental program must remain streamlined and easy for families to use.



Monitor utilization to inform policy recommendations around adjusting reimbursement rates or program administration.