

# Data Brief

## The Oral Health of Ohioans and Their Access to Dental Care, 2011

### Do Ohio's children have good oral health?

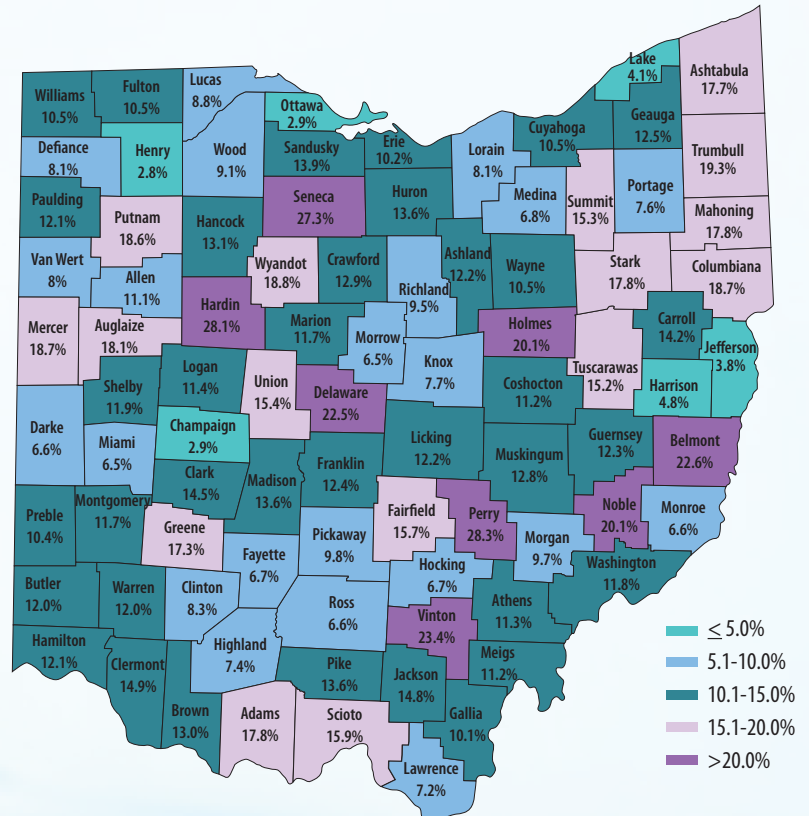
The answer is, "It depends."

Many children in Ohio are enjoying improved oral health. Results of the most recent oral health survey of schoolchildren show that, overall, fewer children are experiencing cavities than in the past (referred to as having a "history of tooth decay"). Overall, 19 percent of Ohio's children were found to have untreated cavities, a decrease from 26 percent five years ago. The prevalence of dental sealants, the most effective means of preventing the type of tooth decay seen today among most children, has increased to 50 percent, up from 43 percent five years ago. Overall, about 80 percent of children reportedly had a dental visit during the past year.



**However, disparities in the oral health of Ohio's children continue to exist depending on where they live, their families' income and whether they have dental insurance.**

### Percentage of Ohio Children (under age 18) Who Have Never Visited a Dentist, 2008



## Adult's Access to Dental Care

- Nearly 1.2 million working-age adults (18-64 years of age) report that they have dental needs that have not been met.
- More than 3.9 million Ohio adults (45 percent) over 18 years of age don't have dental insurance, almost three times more than the number of Ohio adults without medical insurance.
- More than 964,000 seniors (60 percent) have no dental insurance. Most Medicare does not cover routine dental care.



### The resources for providing dental care to Ohioans fall short of the need. Consider that....

- In 2009, 28 percent of Ohio dentists provided dental care to at least one Medicaid-eligible patient. However, only 12 percent of dentists provided care to a significant number of Medicaid-eligible patients (250 or more patients). Some Ohio counties do not have any dentists who provide care to Medicaid-eligible patients. In 2009, only 29 percent of Medicaid-eligible adults (19-64 years of age) and 22 percent of seniors went to the dentist.
- There are currently 68 dental health professional shortage areas in Ohio, designated by the federal government because there are not enough dentists to serve the needs of the people living there.
- Ohio's network of approximately 100 safety net dental clinics in 47 counties is a life-line for people who can not afford to get dental care in private dental offices. However, these programs are stretched to capacity with waiting lists for appointments that can be weeks or months long.
- For many Ohioans, hospital emergency rooms are the only place that they can get relief from their dental pain, a costly and ineffective option.

## Percentage of Working-Age Adults in Ohio without Dental Insurance, 2008

