

Looking at NJ Medicaid Oral Health Quality Performance for Children

Through a Secret Shopper Market Survey of the MCO Network Directories for Children Ages 0 to 6

January 2025



NEW JERSEY
HEALTH CARE
**QUALITY
INSTITUTE**



The mouth is the gateway to the rest of the body.

Good oral health is **vitaly important** to the **health and wellbeing** of everyone.



National Institutes of Health: Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges. Bethesda, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, 2021.

Importance of Oral Health

Visit the dentist by your baby's first birthday to spot signs of problems early.

- CDC

When your baby's first tooth comes in (or no later than their first birthday), take them to the dentist.

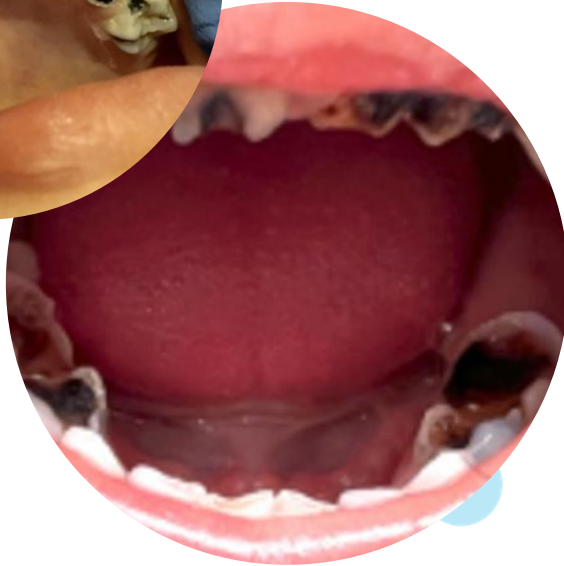
- HRSA

A dental visit for children by 1 year of age.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the American Dental Association, American Dental Hygienists' Association, and the American Association of Public Health Dentistry all recommend.

The age 1 dental visit is a foundation for building a lifetime of good oral health.

- US Department of Health and Human Services and Administration for Children and Families



Quality Measures

The AAPD recommends linking children to a Dental Home by age 1 or the eruption of the first tooth.

However, as a state we are failing our families!

The quality measures released show that

- By age 1 less than 1% of children see a dentist
- At age 2-3 only 22% have preventive care
- At age 3-5 only 50% do

The average for all ages was 44%

Oral Health Data

In **2023** the New Jersey DOH collected oral health data for the first time:

- **36%** of all NJ 3rd graders had untreated dental disease, compared to the national average of 20%.
- **24%** of NJ's Head Start children have untreated decay, compared to 12% nationwide.
- On any given day **15%** of NJ's 3rd graders need **URGENT** dental care.



NJ FamilyCare Results- Measure Year 2022

Oral Evaluation, Dental Services (OEV-CH) by Percentage of Enrollees

Age Group	Aetna	Wellpoint	Horizon	UnitedHealth	Fidelis	NJ Medicaid Average
< 1 Year	0.08	0.83	0.95	1.23	1.16	0.92
1 to 2 Years	8.52	16.6	24.72	23.39	25.37	22.01
3 to 5 Years	27.02	47.9	52.54	54.87	46.18	50.54
6 to 7 Years	31.11	56.98	61.42	63.42	52.24	59.37
8 to 9 Years	32.4	57.73	61.62	63.78	54.75	60.02
10 to 11 Years	30.33	55.79	60.31	62.24	52.21	58.59
12 to 14 Years	28.14	52.03	56.98	60.04	49.37	55.58
15 to 18 Years	20.85	44	48.19	52.2	41.34	47.25

NJ FamilyCare Results- Measure Year 2022

Topical Fluoride for Children (TFL-CH) by percentage of enrollees

Age Group	Aetna	Wellpoint	Horizon	UnitedHealth	Fidelis	NJ Medicaid Average
1 to 2 Years	5.03	13.99	12.48	14.66	16.33	12.68
3 to 5 Years	1.73	23.07	24.23	29.12	21.94	23.69
6 to 7 Years	0.57	25.77	27.33	32.26	23.25	26.77
8 to 9 Years	0.61	25.56	26.39	32.79	23.73	26.47
10 to 11 Years	0.44	22.93	25.24	30.37	20.76	24.91
12 to 14 Years	0.23	19.33	21.69	27.13	18.63	21.65
15 to 18 Years	0.1	10.73	13.64	17.31	10.9	13.5

NJ FamilyCare Results- Measure Year 2022

Sealant Receipt on Permanent First Molars (SFM-CH) by percentage of enrollees

Rate Type	Aetna	Wellpoint	Horizon	UnitedHealth	Fidelis	NJ Medicaid Average
Rate 1 (At Least One Sealant)	23.78	20.32	7.59	37.86	46.62	17.33
Rate 2 (All Four Molars Sealed)	14.4	10.76	4.09	22.42	31.06	9.99

Importance of Oral Health

Keeping Your Child's Smile Healthy

All children are at risk for tooth decay and gum disease. Both are preventable and you can play a key role in your child's oral health. Healthy "baby" teeth and permanent teeth are important to your child's overall health and wellness!



Take your child to the dentist by their First Birthday

- All children should visit the dentist when their first tooth comes in. Seeing the dentist to prevent disease helps keep your child healthy.
- Their pediatrician can give a referral to the dentist at your regular visit and must refer your child to the dentist by their first birthday.
- Your child should visit the dentist twice a year. These visits include an oral exam, X-rays if needed, and preventive services that include cleaning, a fluoride application and instructions to parents/caregivers on how to keep your child's teeth clean.
- Make and keep scheduled dental visits and make sure that all needed treatment is completed.

Dental Services for Children in NJ FamilyCare

Your child should have a dental home. A dental home is where your child receives all of their dental care in a compassionate, caring, family-focused setting. Your NJ FamilyCare health plan will work with you to find a dental home for your child by their first birthday. Please call the Dental Benefits number on your I.D. card or visit your health plan's website for assistance.

Your child cannot have good overall health without good oral health.

Dental Service by Dental Professional	0-1 yr	2-6 yrs	7-20 yrs
A1. Oral Evaluation (Exam)	yes	yes	yes
2. Caries/Cavities Risk Assessment	yes	yes	yes
B. Fluoride Supplements	yes	yes	yes
C. Fluoride Varnish*	yes	yes	yes
D. Prophylaxis with Fluoride		yes	yes
E. Sealants (Permanent teeth to age 16 yrs)		yes	yes
F. Radiographs/x-rays (Non-emergency)	yes	yes	yes
G. Dental Treatment	yes	yes	yes

- ◆ **Oral Evaluations** (including oral hygiene instructions), **Fluoride varnish** and **Cleanings** with fluoride can be provided twice a year or more frequently based on medical necessity and for children with special health care needs.
- ◆ A prescription for **fluoride supplements** may be given by either your dentist or primary care provider (PCP) to help prevent cavities.
- ◆ *The application of **fluoride varnish** to protect teeth from cavities can also be done for children through the age of 5 by their PCP followed by a referral to the dentist for an oral evaluation, X-rays as needed, cleaning and dental treatment.
- ◆ A **Caries/Cavities Risk Assessment** – should be done once a year to determine your child's risk of developing cavities. The visit includes an oral evaluation, instructions on brushing, oral health, safety and nutritional counselling to parents/caregivers and children.
- ◆ **Sealants and repairs of sealants** should be provided to premolars and permanent molars of children between the ages of 6 through 16 to help prevent cavities
- ◆ **Dental treatment** services for primary "baby teeth" and permanent teeth include: **fillings, stainless steel crowns, treatment for toothache and extractions** and should be provided when recommended by your child's dentist.

NJ FAMILYCARE
Cobertura médica económica. Atención médica de calidad.

1-800-701-0710
TTY 1-800-701-0720
www.njfamilycare.org

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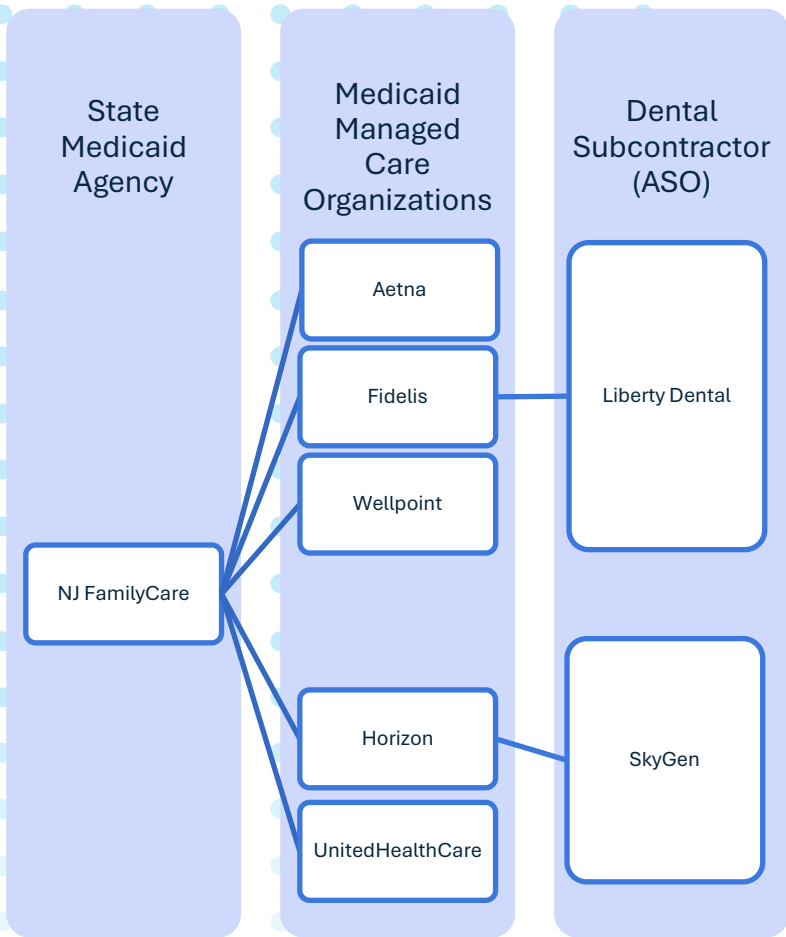
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New Jersey's Promise of Dental Home by Age One

A dental home is where a child receives all their dental care in a compassionate, caring, family-focused setting.

Your NJ FamilyCare health plan will work with you to find a dental home for your child by their first birthday.

Dental Service by Dental Professional	0-1 yr	2-6 yrs	7-20 yrs
A1. Oral Evaluation (Exam)	yes	yes	yes
2. Caries/Cavities Risk Assessment	yes	yes	yes
B. Fluoride Supplements	yes	yes	yes
C. Fluoride Varnish*	yes	yes	yes
D. Prophylaxis with Fluoride		yes	yes
E. Sealants (Permanent teeth to age 16 yrs)		yes	yes
F. Radiographs/x-rays (Non-emergency)	yes	yes	yes
G. Dental Treatment	yes	yes	yes



Dental Care Access Required in NJ FamilyCare MCO Contract

Provider Directory Requirements: Separate listing of dental providers who provide dental services to members under the age of six ; These listings shall be updated as needed and at a minimum quarterly. (section 4.8.4.c)

Include and make available sufficient number of primary care dentists; Pediatric dentists shall be included in the network and may be both primary care and specialty care providing primary care ratio limits are maintained. (section 4.8.8.A.2).

For dental appointments, be able to provide routine non-symptomatic care and/or specialist referrals within twenty-eight (28) days of member request. (section 5.12.N)

The Flow Chart to the left is the shifting of financial risk, but **responsibility to the children** remains with the state and MCOs.

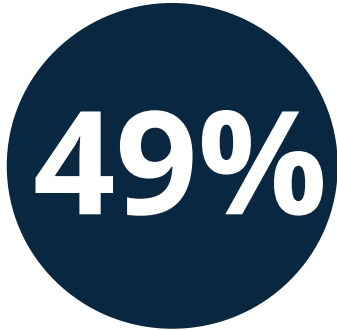
Quality Institute Secret Shopper Research Questions

Q1: Of the practices listed in Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO) dental provider directories as serving children aged 0-6, what percentage offer appointments for patients in this age group?

Q2: Of the practices listed in the MCO provider directories as serving children aged 0-6, what percentage of the information listed is accurate?



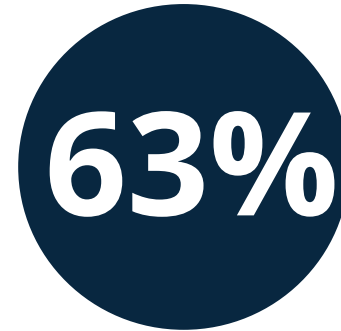
Results



The MCO 0-6 directories were accurate **49%** of the time regarding **providing care for a 2-year old**.

51% of the time the practice said they **did not schedule appointments** for **2-year olds**.

Results



Of the practices listed in the MCO 0-6 directories reported that they **were in-network with the the MCO** at the time of the call.

The balance of the time, **(37%)** the practices reported they did **not accept that insurance**.

Patient Access Areas of Concern

Providers with waiting lists of 6 months long.

Providers with waiting of 300+ names long.

First appointments are exams only, not cleanings.

Overall, provider representatives on the phone have common misconceptions about what age is appropriate to begin seeing a dentist.

0-6 Year Old Network Directory Areas of Concern

51% listed on the 0-6-
directory do not accept
children aged 2 years old

37% listed do not accept
the insurance for which
they were listed in that
MCO 0-6 directory

14% of practices were
unreachable, with no
answer after two attempts
to call; 4% couldn't be
reached because the
wrong number was listed

Appointment Availability:
Average
Wait Time: 31.54 days

Background & Additional Data



Secret Shopper Methodology

Script Design:

Created a script for scheduling dental appointments, including specific questions and responses.

Practice Selection:

Chose practices from all five Medicaid MCO Directories of Dentists Treating Children under the Age of 6. Only general and pediatric dentists were chosen (824). This included FQHCs.

Process:

All 824 practices were called.

Attempted to schedule an appointment for a two-year-old child.



New Jersey Statewide Secret Shopper Results

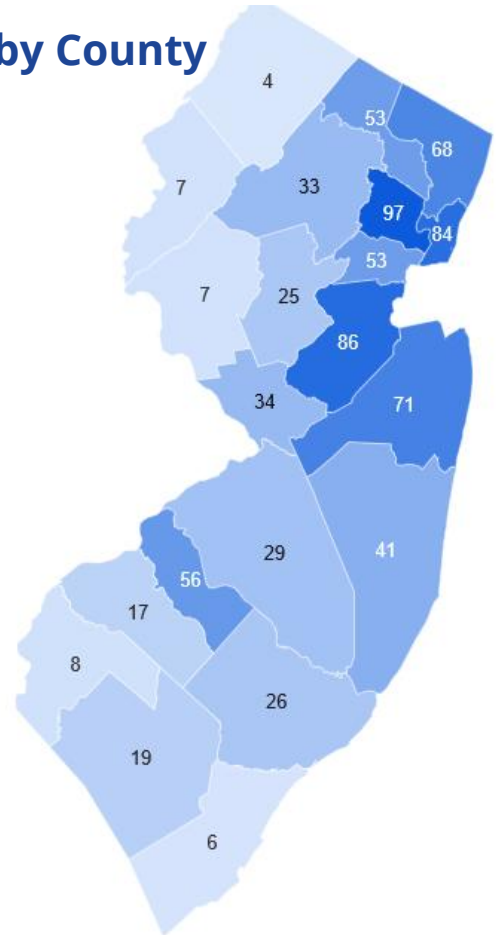
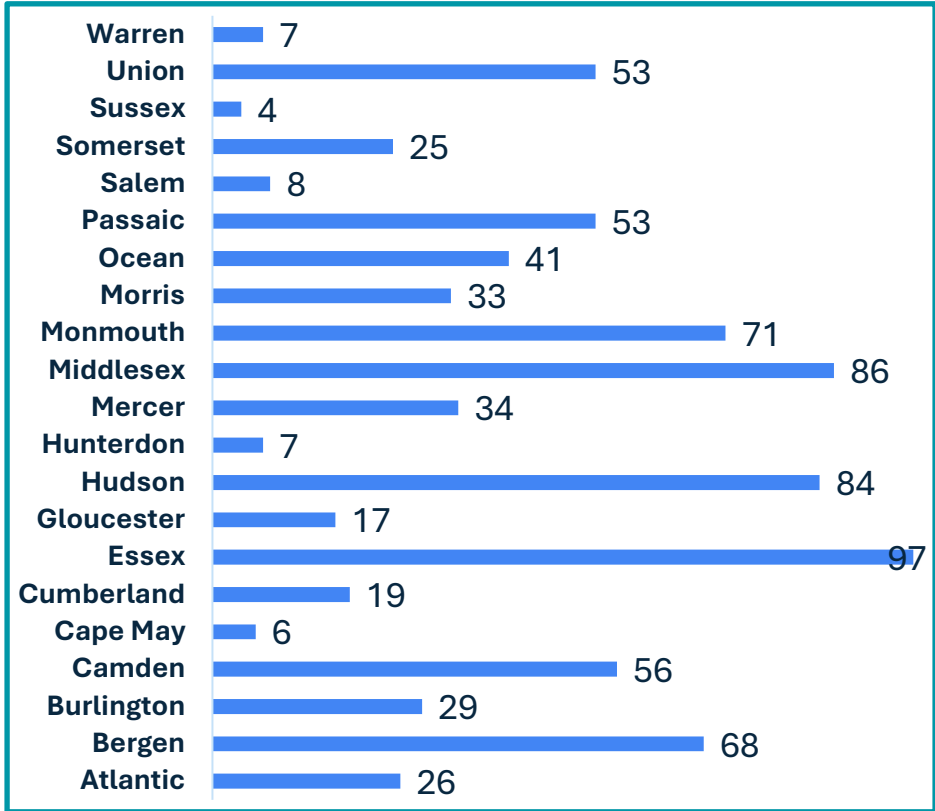
New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute - July 2024

Statistics	Results
Number of Listed Practices	824 offices
Reached Practices	86.04%
Unreachable Practices	13.96%
Incorrect Phone Number	4.25%
Actual Matches Directory for Age	49.03%
Actual Matches Directory for Insurance	63.23%
Offering Multiple MCOs	62.14%
Not Accepting New Patients	2.18%
Hold Time	9 mins
Average Appointment Date Distance	31.54 days away
Median Appointment Date Distance	12 days
Range of Appointment Date Distance	0-381 days

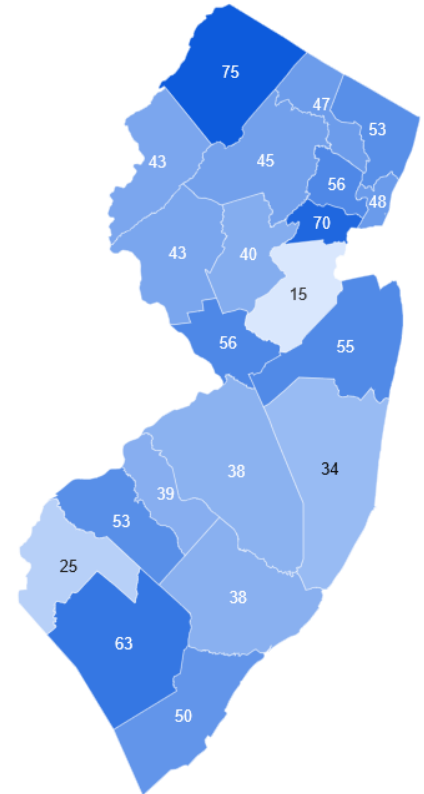
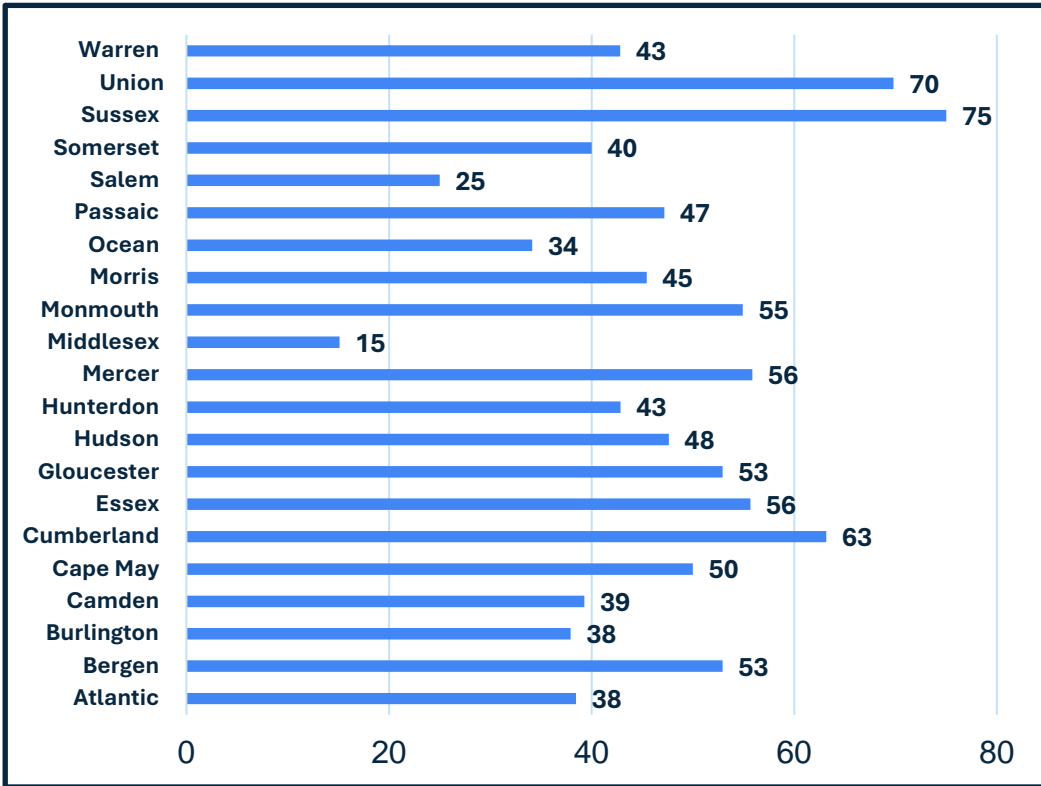
Data Categories & Definitions

Category	Definition
Number of Listed Practices	Number of offices from all MCO directories that "Accept patients 0-6 years old" that are listed as either pediatric dentistry or general dentistry.
Reached Practices	Percentage of offices that were called that answered the phone and were able to respond to questions.
Unreachable Practices	Percentage of offices called that did not answer after repeated attempts (at least two calls).
Incorrect Phone Number	Percentage of offices that were unreachable due to an incorrect phone number listed on the directories.
Actual Matches Directory for Age	Percentage of offices that were able to accept appointments for patients ages 2 and up.
Actual Matches Directory for Insurance	Percentage of offices that accepted the MCO insurance used during the call, selected randomly from the list provided.
Offering Multiple MCOs	Percentage of offices that accept multiple MCOs, extracted from the MCO directory listings.
Not Accepting New Patients	Percentage of offices that stated that they were no longer accepting new patients during a call.
Hold Time	Maximum average wait time for calls that placed our researchers on hold.
Average Appointment Date Distance	Average length of time until an available appointment.
Median Appointment Date Distance	Median length of time until an available appointment.

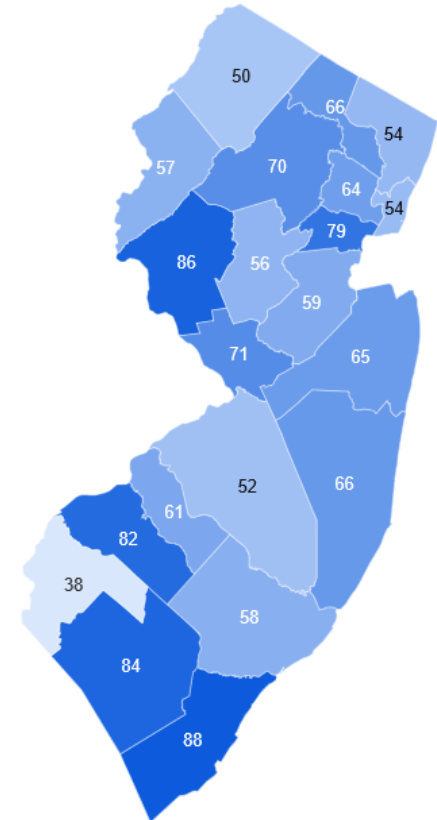
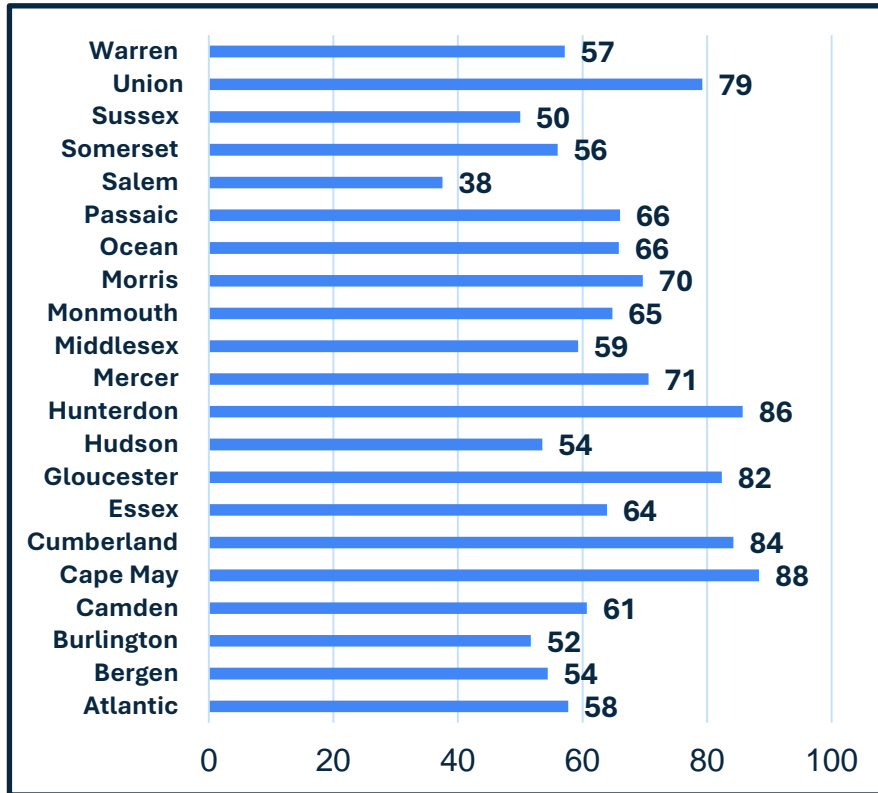
Number of Dental Practices Listed in 0-6 Directories by County



Percentage of the 0-6 Directory Listings With Accurate Information That Practice Provides Dental Care for Two Year Olds



Percentage of 0-6 Directory Listings With Accurate Insurance Network Information



Context

For context, as of July 2024, total children’s enrollment in NJ FamilyCare, **ages 0-18, was 816,774.**

Enrollment by county listed to the right.

The number of children 0-6 is not publicly available.

County	Total Enrollment - Children 0-18
Atlantic	29,726
Bergen	49,495
Burlington	28,696
Camden	54,885
Cape May	6,884
Cumberland	24,453
Essex	101,756
Gloucester	20,244
Hudson	74,313
Hunterdon	4,277
Mercer	39,123
Middlesex	65,599
Monmouth	36,341
Morris	19,357
Ocean	97,139
Passaic	69,074
Salem	6,666
Somerset	16,720
Sussex	6,053
Union	58,187
Warren	7,046
Total	816,774

Thank you!

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