

STATISTICAL BRIEF #156

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Dental Expenditures in the 10 Largest States, 2004

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Introduction

In 2004, expenditures for dental care among the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized (community) population were 7.4 percent of total health care expenditures. In 2004, 42.5 percent of the population had a dental expenditure. This percentage closely aligns with the population's experience in 2002 and 2003 when 42.7 and 42.2 percent, respectively, of the population had a dental expenditure. The mean dental expense per person with an expense in 2004 was \$575, an increase of 6.5 percent from the 2003 value of \$540. This increase was higher than the rate of change in inflation based on the Consumer Price Index.

Dental expenditures are also distinguished from overall health expenditures in the distribution of sources of payment. In 2004, 42.8 percent of all medical expenditures were paid by private insurance. A similar proportion of dental expenditures, 43.0 percent, was paid by private insurance. However, a much smaller amount of the cost of dental care was paid by government programs, such as Medicaid or Medicare. In addition, persons with a dental expenditure in 2004 paid 48.0 percent of the costs out of pocket. This is about two and a half times the rate of 19.0 percent paid out of pocket for overall health expenditures.

This Statistical Brief presents estimates based on data from the Household Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS-HC) on the use, costs, and sources of payment for dental expenditures for persons in the community population in 2004 for the 10 largest States and compares the results to the national average for 2004. Only those estimates with statistically significant differences from the national average using a multiple comparison procedure at the 0.05 significance level are noted in the text.

Findings

In 2004, 42.5 percent of all persons in the U.S. community population had an expenditure for dental care (figure 1). In Texas, the percentage was 31.8 percent, and in Florida it was 38.0 percent. Both of these rates were significantly lower than the national average. For persons in Michigan the percentage was 53.8 percent. This rate was higher than the national average.

The national average expenditure for dental care in 2004 for persons who had an expenditure was \$575 (figure 2). The average expenditure of \$742 for the year for persons in California who had an expenditure

Highlights

- In 2004, dental expenditures represented about 7.4 percent of all medical expenditures for persons in the U.S. community population.
- The percentage of persons with a dental expenditure in 2004 was lower than the national average in Texas, Florida, and Georgia and higher than the national average in Michigan.
- The average expenditure for dental care for a person with an expenditure was higher than the national average in California and lower than the national average in Pennsylvania and Texas.
- The percentage of dental expenditures paid by private insurance in Florida was lower than the national average.
- The percentage of dental expenditures paid out of pocket by persons in Florida was higher than the national average.

was higher than the national average. Persons in Texas and Pennsylvania who had an expenditure spent an average of \$484 and \$419, respectively. Both these values were lower than the national average.

Nationwide in 2004, private insurance paid for 43.0 percent of the expenditures for dental care (figure 3). In Florida, private insurance paid for a lower proportion of these expenditures, 34.5 percent.

Out-of-pocket payments in 2004 accounted for 48.0 percent of dental expenditures (figure 4). In Florida, out-of-pocket payments for dental expenditures were significantly higher than the national average, 57.9 percent.

Definitions

Expenditures

Expenses include total payments from all sources to hospitals, physicians, other health care providers (including dental care and home health), pharmacies, and providers of other medical equipment for services reported by respondents in the MEPS-HC. Sources include direct payments from individuals, private insurance (including TRICARE), Medicare, Medicaid, and various other sources (including the Veterans' Administration, Workers' Compensation, and miscellaneous public sources).

Dental expenditures

This subcategory of expenditures includes those expenses for any type of dental provider.

About MEPS-HC

MEPS-HC is a nationally representative longitudinal survey that collects detailed information on health care utilization and expenditures, health insurance, and health status, as well as a wide variety of social, demographic, and economic characteristics for the civilian noninstitutionalized population. It is cosponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the National Center for Health Statistics.

For more information about MEPS, call the MEPS information coordinator at AHRQ (301-427-1656) or visit the MEPS Web site at <http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/>.

References

For a detailed description of the MEPS survey design, sample design, and methods used to minimize sources of nonsampling error, see the following publications:

Cohen, J. *Design and Methods of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Household Component*. MEPS Methodology Report No. 1. AHCPR Pub. No. 97-0026. Rockville, Md.: Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, 1997.

Cohen, S. *Sample Design of the 1996 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Household Component*. MEPS Methodology Report No. 2. AHCPR Pub. No. 97-0027. Rockville, Md.: Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, 1997.

Cohen, S. Design Strategies and Innovations in the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey. *Medical Care*, July 2003: 41(7) Supplement: III-5–III-12.

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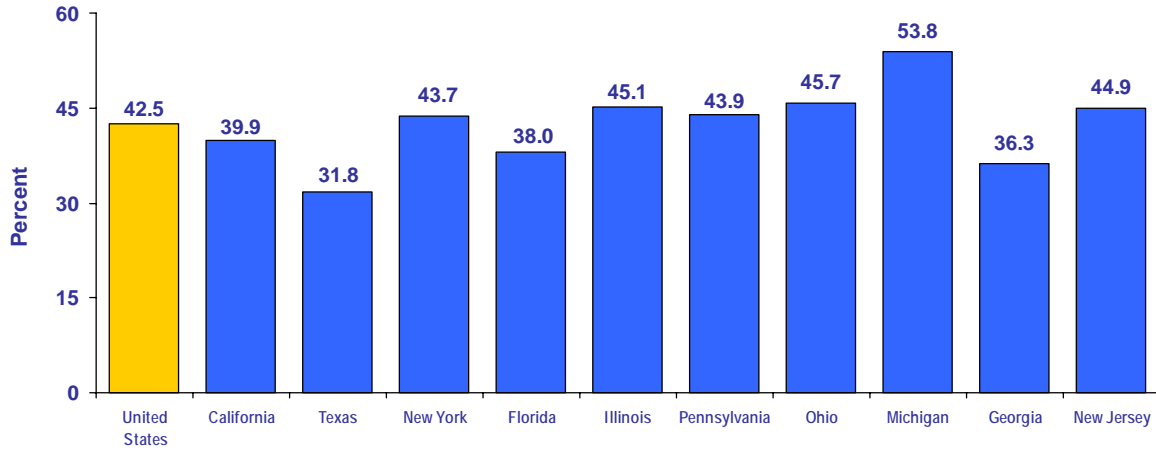
AHRQ welcomes questions and comments from readers of this publication who are interested in obtaining more information about access, cost, use, financing, and quality of health care in the United

States. We also invite you to tell us how you are using this Statistical Brief and other MEPS data and tools and to share suggestions on how MEPS products might be enhanced to further meet your needs. Please e-mail us at mepspd@ahrq.gov or send a letter to the address below:

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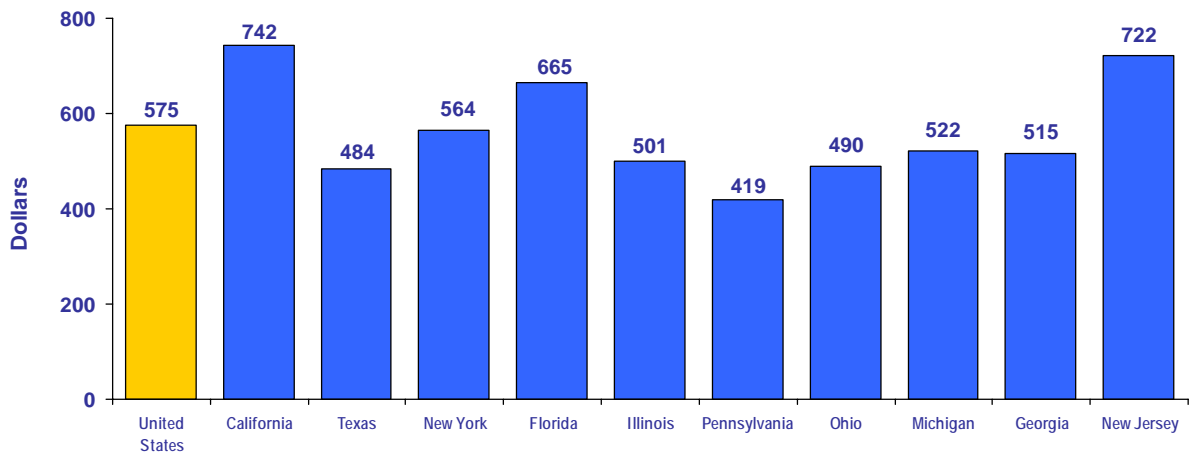
Figure 1. Percentage of persons who had a dental expenditure in 2004, United States and 10 largest States



Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Household Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2004



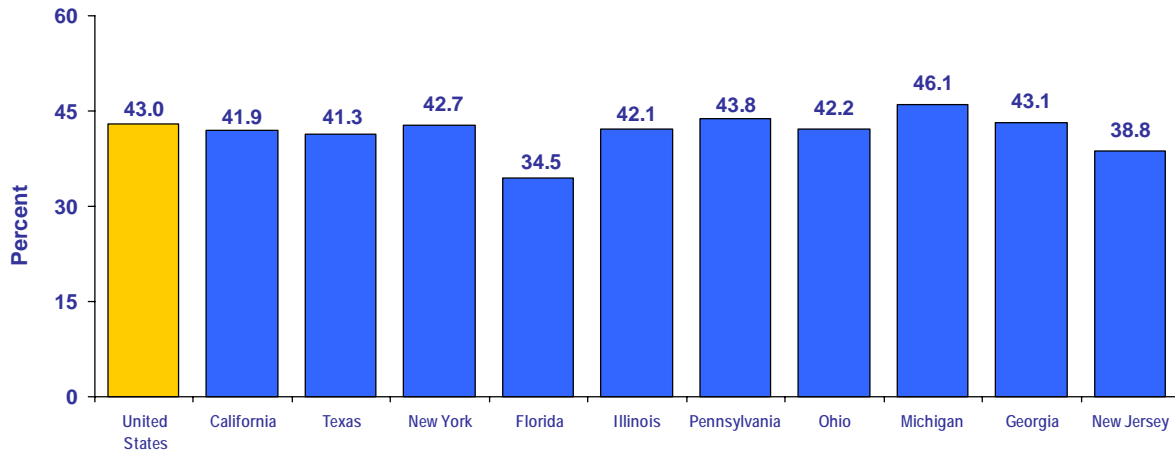
Figure 2. Average dental expenditures for persons who had an expenditure in 2004, United States and 10 largest States



Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Household Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2004



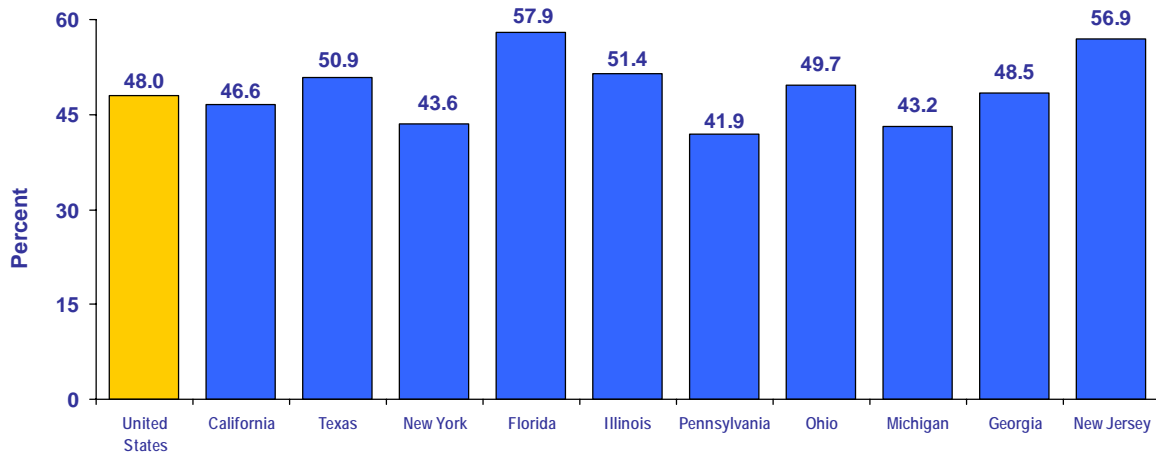
Figure 3. Percentage of dental expenditures paid by private insurance in 2004, United States and 10 largest States



Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Household Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2004



Figure 4. Percentage of dental expenditures paid out of pocket in 2004, United States and 10 largest States



Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Household Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2004