

## Medicaid Participation by Private Dentists in Alabama

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**Abstract: Objective:** The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between private dentists' attitudes toward Medicaid and Medicaid patients and their extent of Medicaid participation. **Methods:** A survey was mailed to all Medicaid dentists in Alabama in 2003 (N=578). Descriptive statistics were calculated, and multiple regression models were tested. The "dentists' extent of participation" was a measure of the percentage of Medicaid patients seen in one month. Independent variables included dentists' personal and practice characteristics; market area characteristics; and dentists' attitudes toward Medicaid and Medicaid patients. **Results:** A total of 277 (54%) surveys was returned. Non-Caucasian dentists in group practice had a higher mean of extent of Medicaid participation than Caucasian dentists in solo practice. Moreover, compared to privately insured families, dentists had significantly higher mean of extent of Medicaid participation if they perceived Medicaid reimbursement as generous; payments being processed faster; and families as not acceptable to non-Medicaid families in the practice. **Conclusions:** Dentists' perceptions of Medicaid policies, such as generosity of payment and speed of processing payment are important to ensure continued provider participation in Medicaid. Strategies to improve dentists' participation in Medicaid must be multifaceted to increase access to dental services for Medicaid children. (Pediatr Dent 2007;29:293-302)

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