

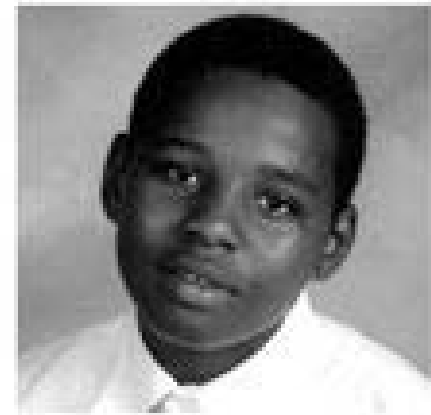


# **The Importance of Children's Oral Health: What Policymakers Need to Know**

Shelly Gehshan, Director, Pew Children's Dental Campaign

## Death of Deamonte Driver

- Deamonte complained of severe headaches, not dental problems.
- In January 2007, he was diagnosed with a brain infection, caused by an infected tooth. He had two brain surgeries and spent six weeks in the hospital, where he died suddenly on February 25, 2007.
- His hospitalization and death could have been prevented with one \$40 sealant or an \$80 tooth extraction.
- The *Washington Post* covered the story and brought national attention to the oral health crisis.



**Deamonte Driver, 12**

Died February 25, 2007

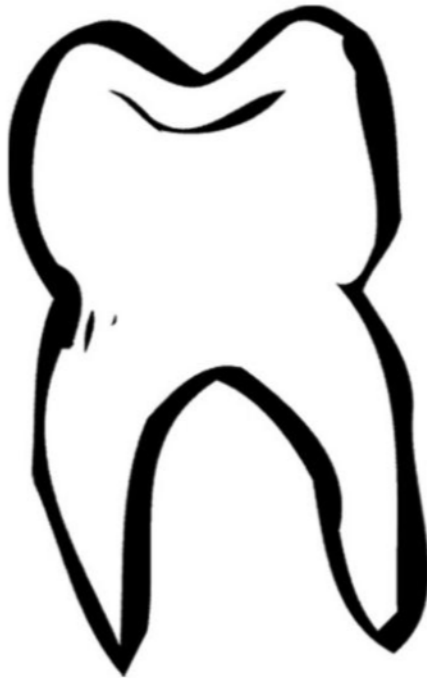


## Why Pew Cares About Kids' Dental Health

- Strong interest in promoting kids' readiness for school
- Builds on our early education campaign
- Seeks to improve government performance – only 1/3 of Medicaid children receive care
- There is strong evidence for solutions
- Bipartisan support for change
- The issue is “ripe” for change

## Why Does Oral Health Matter?

### Poor oral health can affect a child's...



Nutrition

Overall Health

Social Adjustment

Appearance

School Performance

Ability to Thrive

# How Pew Campaigns Work



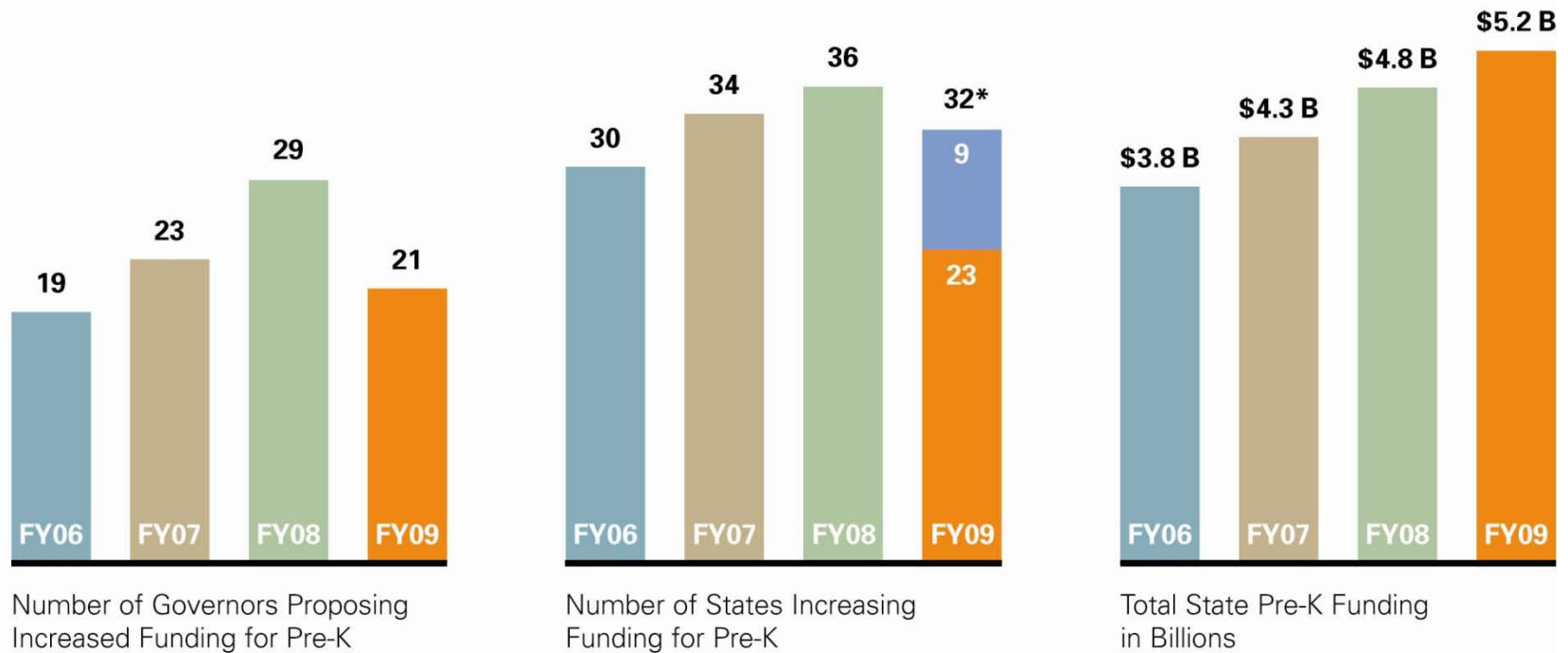


## One Example: Advancing Quality Pre-K For All

- An advocacy campaign to achieve pre-k for all 3- and 4-year olds
- Invested almost \$90 million; state spending up by \$2.4 billion
- **Campaign Partners:**
  - Pre-K Now (now part of Pew)
  - National Institute for Early Education Research
  - 25 national organizations
  - Funding partners

# Growth of State Support for Pre-k Nationwide

## Growth of State Support for Pre-K Nationwide



\* At press time, 23 state increases are confirmed, and another nine are anticipated in school funding formula states. Prior year figures include anticipated increases that have since been confirmed.

Source: "Votes Count: Legislative Action on Pre-K Fiscal Year 2009," Pre-K Now, 2008.

# Goal for Pew Children's Dental Campaign

- *Problem:* Lack of access is a significant challenge facing children that affects their health, education and ability to prosper
- *Initiative goal:* To advance policies in selected states that will enable 4 million additional children every year to get access to the care they need



## Policies Elected Officials could Support

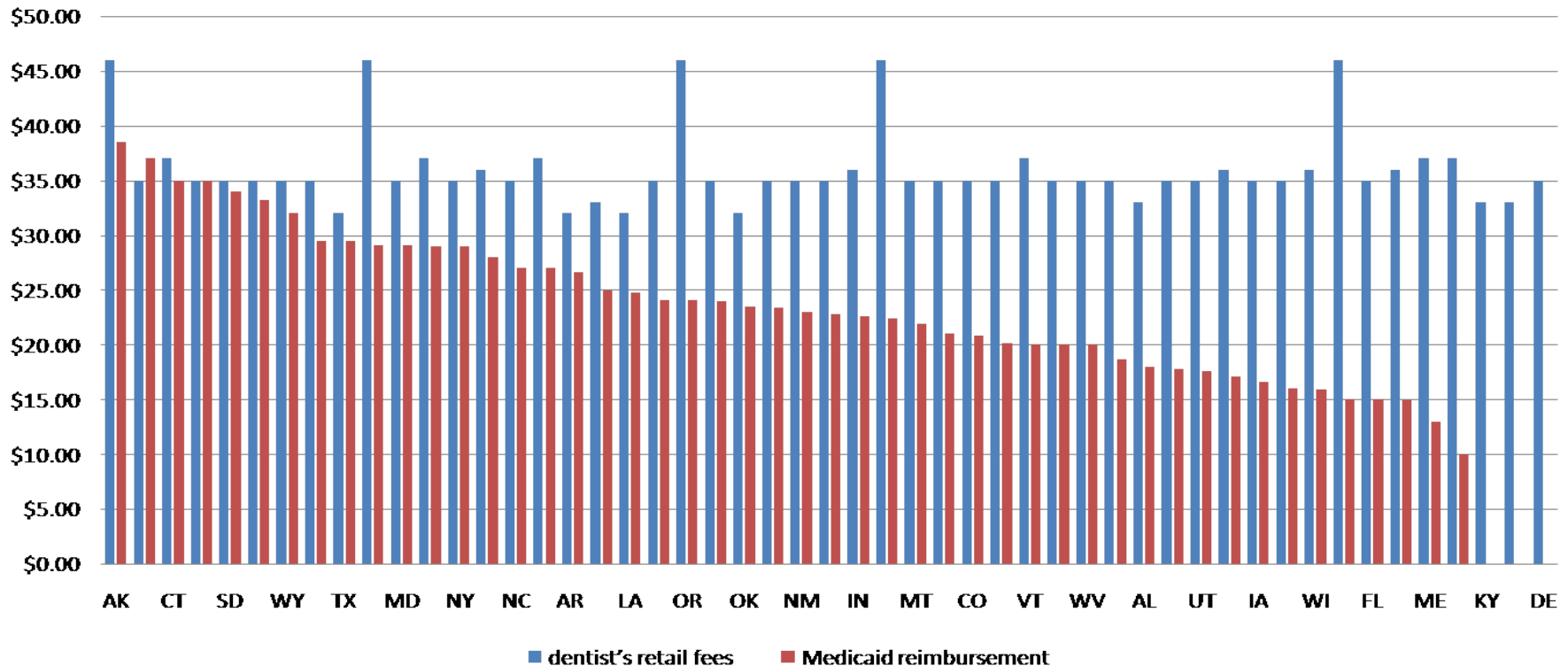
- ✓ Funding for children's dental care—Medicaid and CHIP
- ✓ Prevention—sealants and water fluoridation
- ✓ Workforce—expanding providers for kids

## Funding for Care

- Support Medicaid reimbursement for prevention for young children by physicians
- Support higher Medicaid reimbursement for dental care



## Reimbursement vs. Retail Fees (Exam)

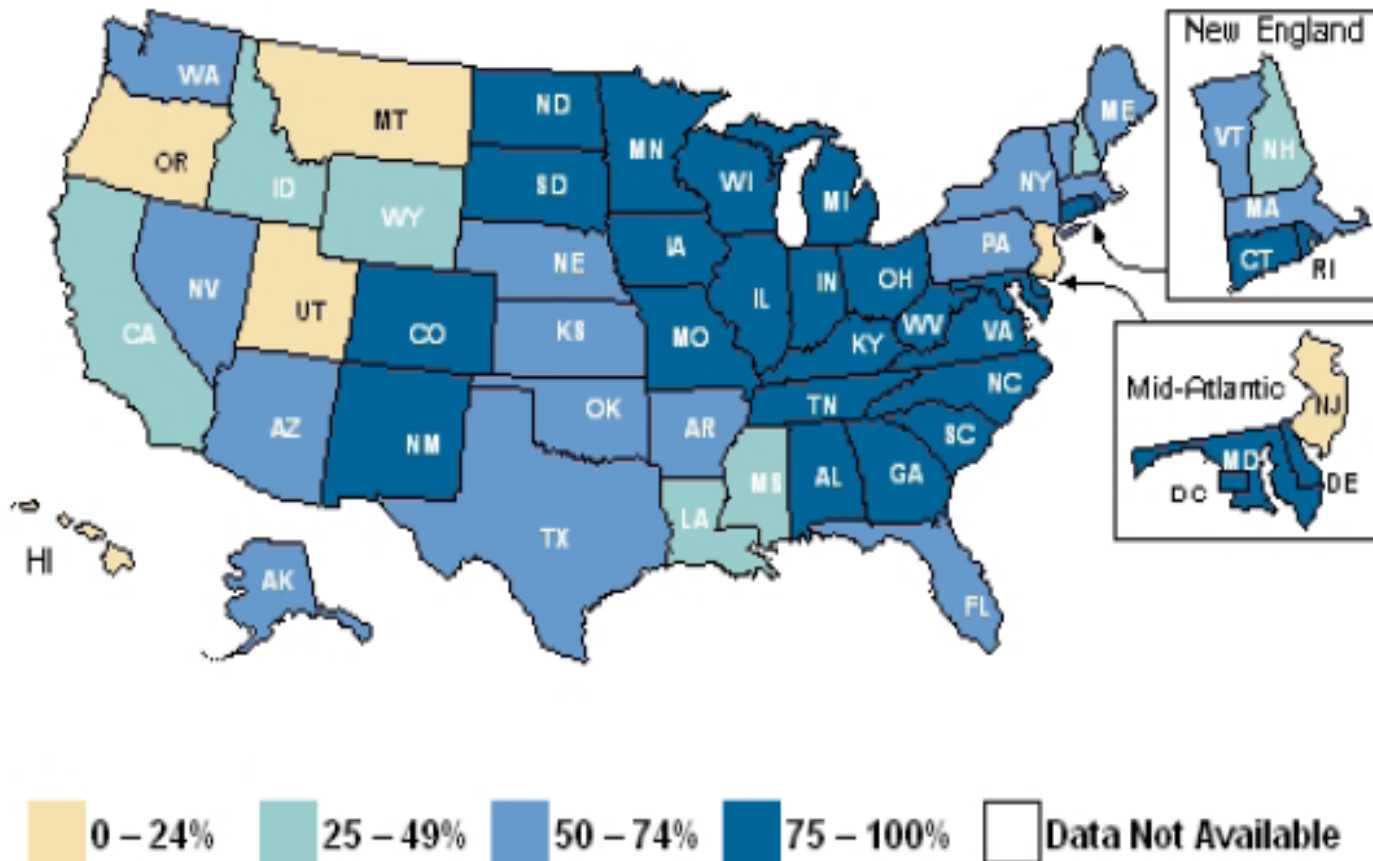


Note: Delaware pays 80% of dentists' billed charges.

# Prevention

- Support community water fluoridation
- Support school-based sealant programs
- Early and timely intervention (perinatal and infant oral health)

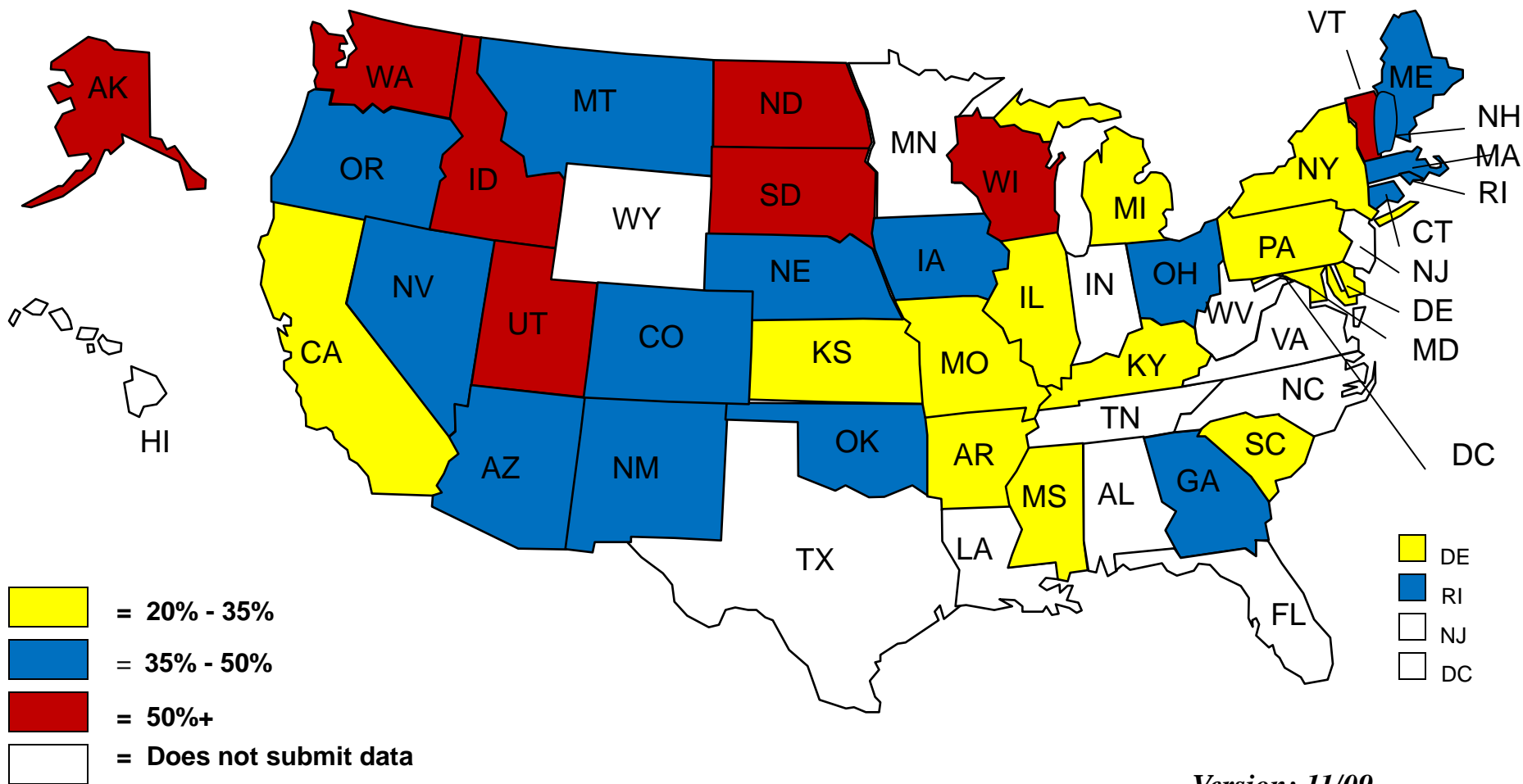
## Percentage of State Population served by Public Water Systems that Receive Fluoridated Water — 2005



## Biggest areas without fluoridation

- Long Island, NY 1,239,564
- San Jose, CA 979,000
- Honolulu, HI 905,034
- Philadelphia, PA Suburbs 820,000
- Bergen & Hudson Counties, NJ 764,820
- Tucson, AZ 675,000
- Portland, OR 575,930
- Fresno, CA 485,000

# STATE percentage of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders with dental sealants



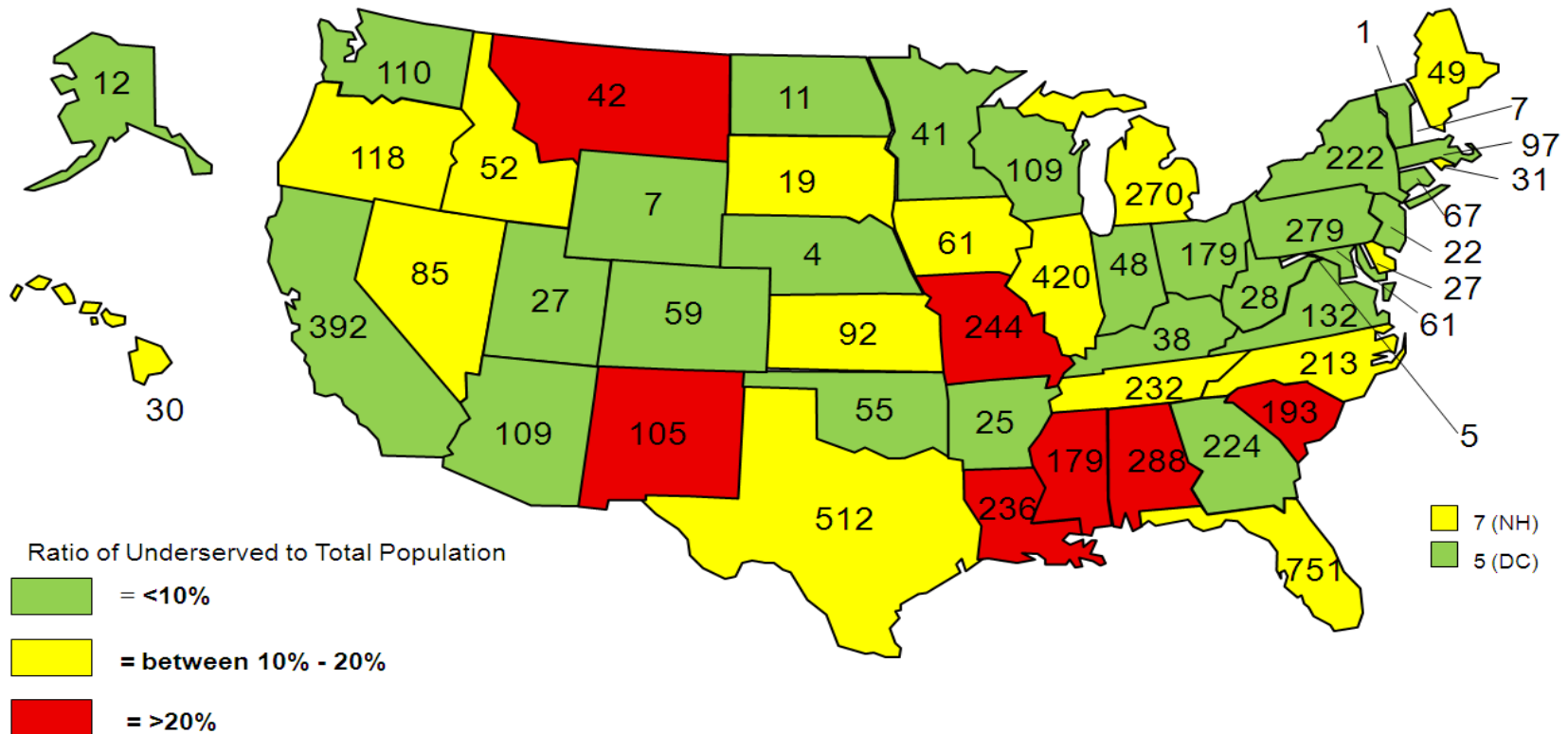
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# Workforce

- Support a variety of workforce solutions
- Support consideration of new dental providers
  - Alaska tribal areas have Dental Health Aide Therapists (like nurse practitioner for dental)
  - Minnesota enacted legislation in May to establish dental therapists
  - 12 state dental associations are meeting to review new models of providers

# Practitioners Needed to Remove Designation of Health Professional Shortage Area





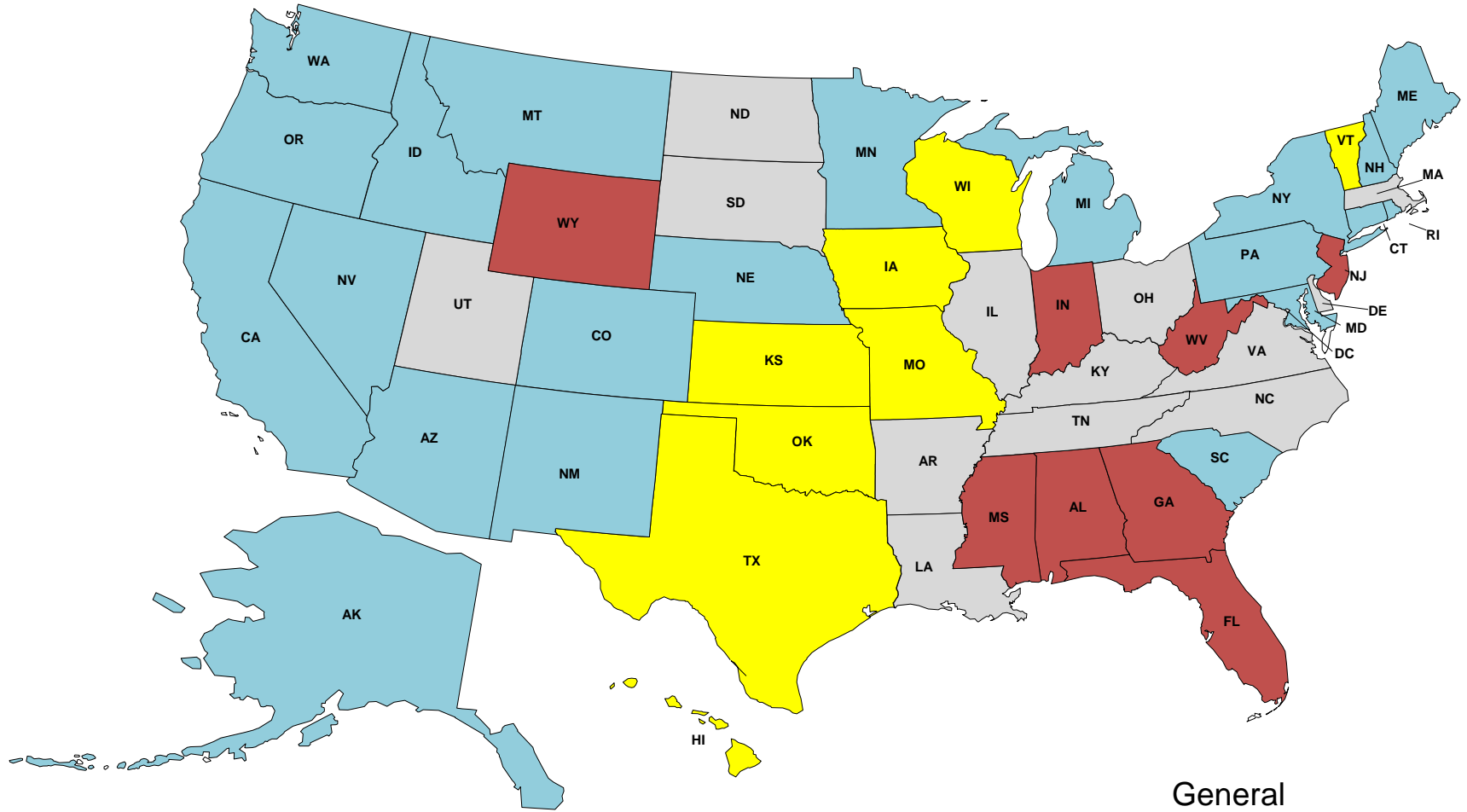
## ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF RETIRING DENTISTS AND DENTAL GRADUATES, 2001-2020.

YEAR	DENTISTS RETIRING*	DENTISTS GRADUATING†	RATIO	DIFFERENCE
2001	3,546	4,090	.867	-544
2002	3,631	4,130	.879	-499
2003	3,754	4,172	.900	-419
2004	3,805	4,213	.903	-409
2005	4,028	4,256	.946	-228
2006	4,149	4,298	.965	-149
2007	4,226	4,341	.974	-115
2008	4,447	4,385	1.014	62
2009	4,563	4,428	1.030	135
2010	4,816	4,472	1.077	344
2011	5,029	4,517	1.113	512
2012	4,928	4,563	1.080	365
2013	5,117	4,608	1.110	509
2014	5,114	4,654	1.099	460
2015	5,114	4,701	1.088	413
2016	5,233	4,748	1.102	485
2017	5,060	4,795	1.055	265
2018	5,237	4,843	1.081	394
2019	5,003	4,892	1.023	111
2020	4,965	4,941	1.005	24

\* Assumes that 20, 50, 20 and 10 percent of dentists retire after 40, 35, 30 and 25 years in practice, respectively, and that the average age of retirement is 62 years.

† Based on the average annual rate of growth (1.0 percent) of first-year enrollments from the 1989 to 1990 school year to the 1998 to 1999 school year.

# Supervision Rules for RDH Sealant application--2008



■ Direct Supervision Required (8)

■ General Supervision in PH Setting; Dentist Exam Required (13)

■ Dentist Exam Sometimes Required (8)

■ General Supervision in PH Setting; Dentist Exam Not Required (22)

## The Pew Dental Campaign Team

- ✓ Dedicated staff members
  - Director *Shelly Gehshan*
  - State campaigns leader *Laurie Norris*
  - Federal campaigns associate *Rebecca Alderfer*
  - State policy research *Andy Snyder*
  - Communications *Nicole Dueffert*
  - Policy Advisor *Bill Maas*
  - Administrative Assistant *Molly Lyons*

# Pew Children's Dental Campaign

## Mission:

To promote policies that will help millions of children maintain healthy teeth, and come to school ready to learn.

