

**2023**  
**York Public**  
**Health District**  
**Oral Health Profile**

Funding for this report has been provided by:



## Children's Oral Health Network of Maine

The [Children's Oral Health Network of Maine](#) (COHN) is a network of organizations and individuals united by a common vision: ensuring that all Maine children can grow up free from preventable dental disease. Creating a Maine where no child experiences dental disease will demand bold solutions, collaborative action, and system change on many levels. The goal of COHN is to catalyze collaboration and innovation in order to expand Maine's capacity to ensure that effective prevention, education, and treatment tools reach all Maine children.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4
York Public Health District Demographics: York County .....	5
Dental Insurance Coverage .....	6
Points of Care .....	8
Schools .....	13
Head Start .....	15
Primary Care .....	16
Utilization .....	18
Workforce .....	20
Methods .....	21
Data Sources Referenced .....	22

## Introduction

Formed by municipalities in both rural and urban areas, York County has the second largest total population in Maine.

With the rural areas of the county having significantly reduced access to oral health care compared to the more densely populated coastal regions of the county, an in-depth analysis was needed to understand the status of oral health and access to care in the York Public Health District.

The results of this oral health profile will guide the development of initiatives to increase access to preventive oral health care for children and reduce the burden of dental disease on the community.



## York Public Health District Demographics: York County

York County is home to roughly 204,000 residents with an average household income of \$67,830<sup>1</sup>. With the third highest population density in Maine, York County has the second largest population of any Maine County, lowest percentage of children living in poverty<sup>1</sup>, and holds 15% of Maine’s children.

While a relatively small county geographically, York County is considered a more urban/suburban county with less residents living in rural areas than the state average.<sup>3</sup>

*Table 1. Demographic Indicators of the York Public Health District*

Demographic Indicator	York County	State of Maine
<b>Total population<sup>1</sup></b>	204,316	1.34M
<b>Children aged 5 -17, 2020<sup>2</sup></b>	38,202	247,952
<b>Square miles<sup>4</sup></b>	989	32,215
<b>Population density per sq. mile</b>	200	43 <sup>3</sup>
<b>% living in rural areas<sup>3</sup></b>	57%	61%
<b>Average annual household income<sup>1</sup></b>	\$67,830	\$57,918
<b>% children in poverty, 2021<sup>1</sup></b>	10%	14%

## Dental Insurance Coverage

- From 2019 to 2021, the number of children in York County covered by Maine’s Medicaid Program, MaineCare, increased by more than 3,000. A similar trend was seen across the state with the total number of children consistently covered by MaineCare during the same period, for at least 11 months out of the year, increasing by more than 25,000.
- The number of children in York County consistently covered by commercial insurance decreased by about 200 children, contrasting with the state trend that showed a net increase over this time period.
- The number of children in York County with intermittent dental coverage, either MaineCare or commercial insurance for less than 11 months out of the year, followed the state trend with a decrease seen over the same period.
- The sharp increase in the number of children covered by MaineCare led to a notable difference in coverage patterns from 2019 to 2021 when compared to the State. In 2019, considerably more children were covered by commercial insurance than by MaineCare in York County, a direct contrast to the State as a whole; whereas, in 2021, more children in York County were covered by MaineCare.

**Figure 1.** Number of children in York County with dental insurance, by type, either consistently (coverage at least 11 months out of the year) or intermittently (coverage for less than 11 months out of the year).

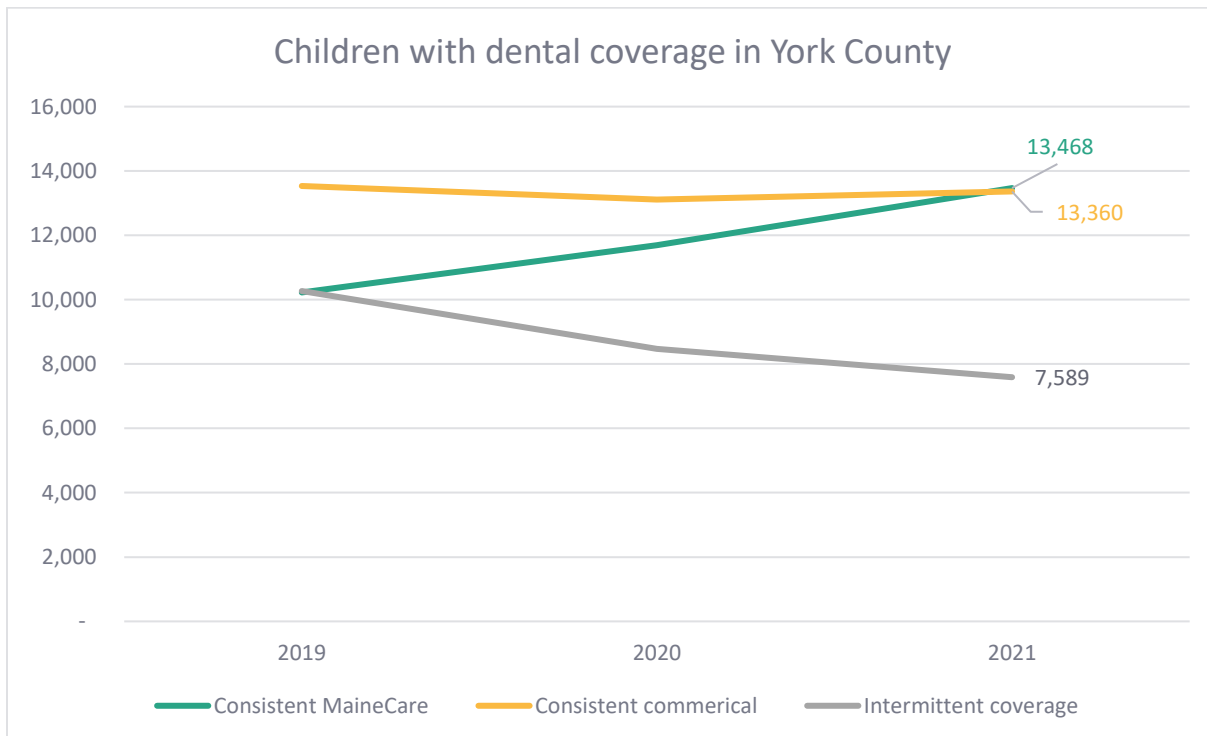
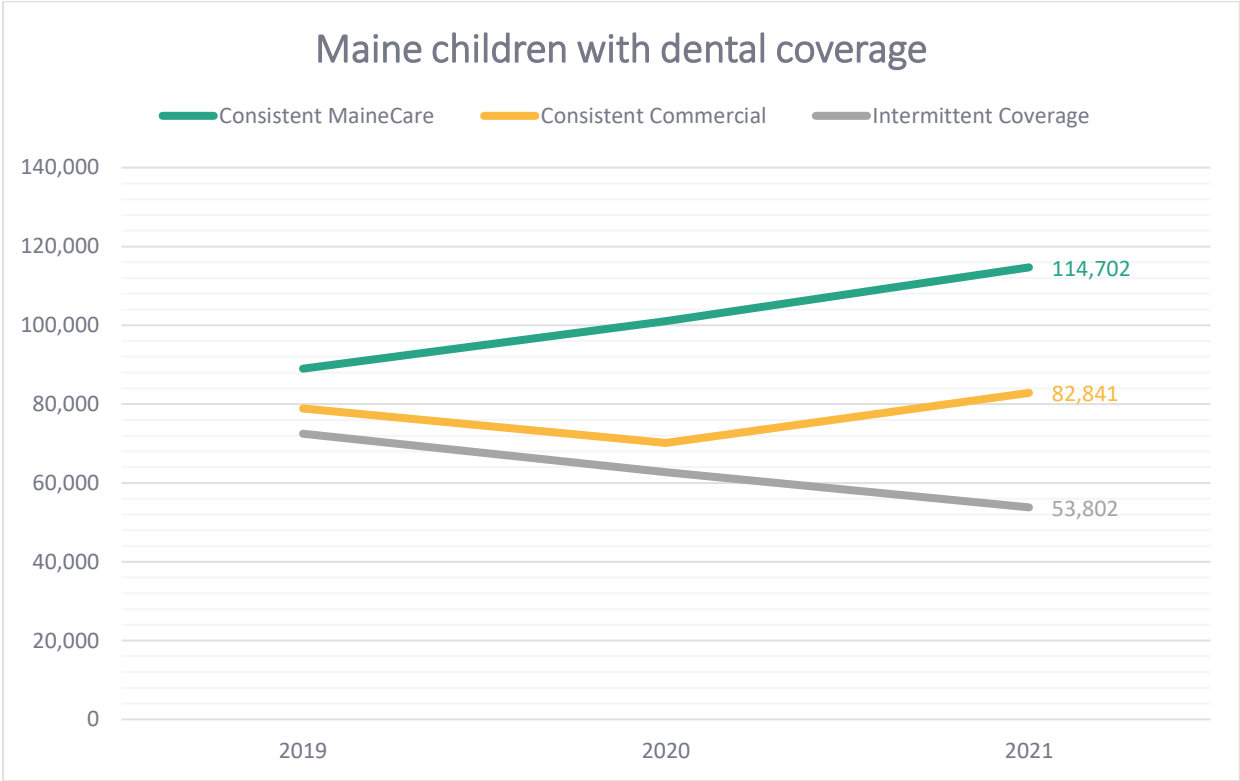


Figure 2. Number of children in Maine with dental insurance, by type, either consistently (coverage for at least 11 months out of the year) or intermittently (coverage for less than 11 months out of the year).



## Points of Care

- York County has more dental points of care than most Maine counties, and the county's population-to-dentist ratio is significantly higher than the state average.<sup>6</sup> There are 50 points of care for preventive and restorative dental care in York County, including two independent practice dental hygiene offices, one non-profit dental clinic, and one federally qualified health center (FQHC). Even though the population of children living in this county is significantly higher than other regions, there are only three pediatric dental offices.

Table 2. Dental care access indicators in the York Public Health District <sup>1</sup>		
Access indicator	York County	State
Rate (n population: 1 dentist) in 2019	3,215	2,700

Figure 3: Points of restorative and preventive dental care in the York Public Health District.

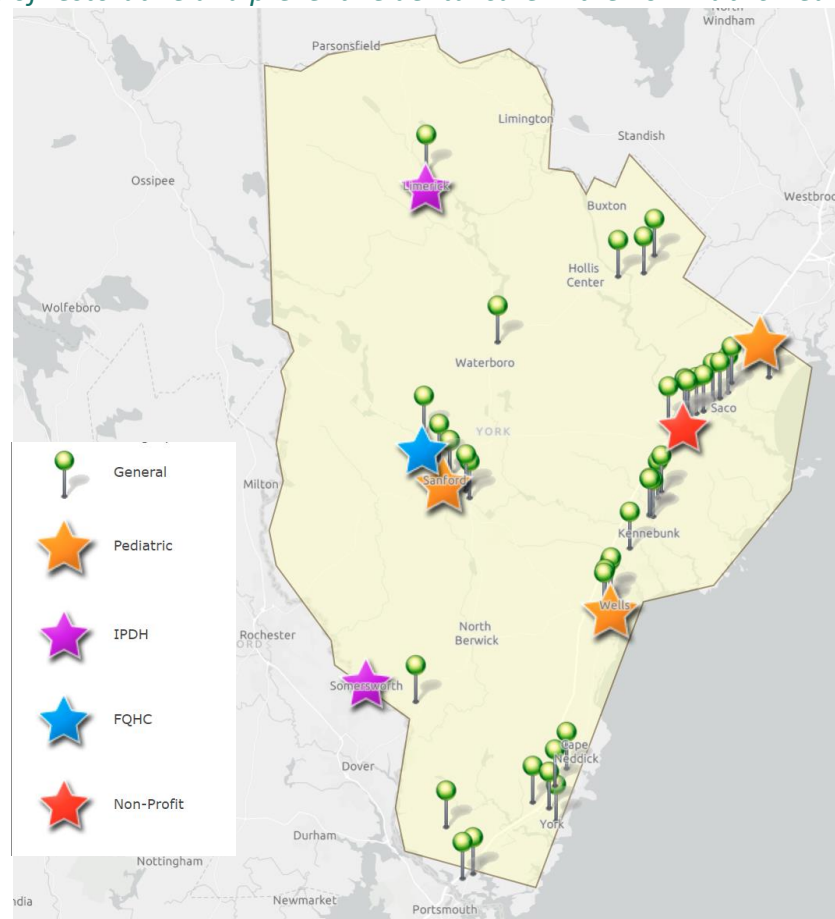
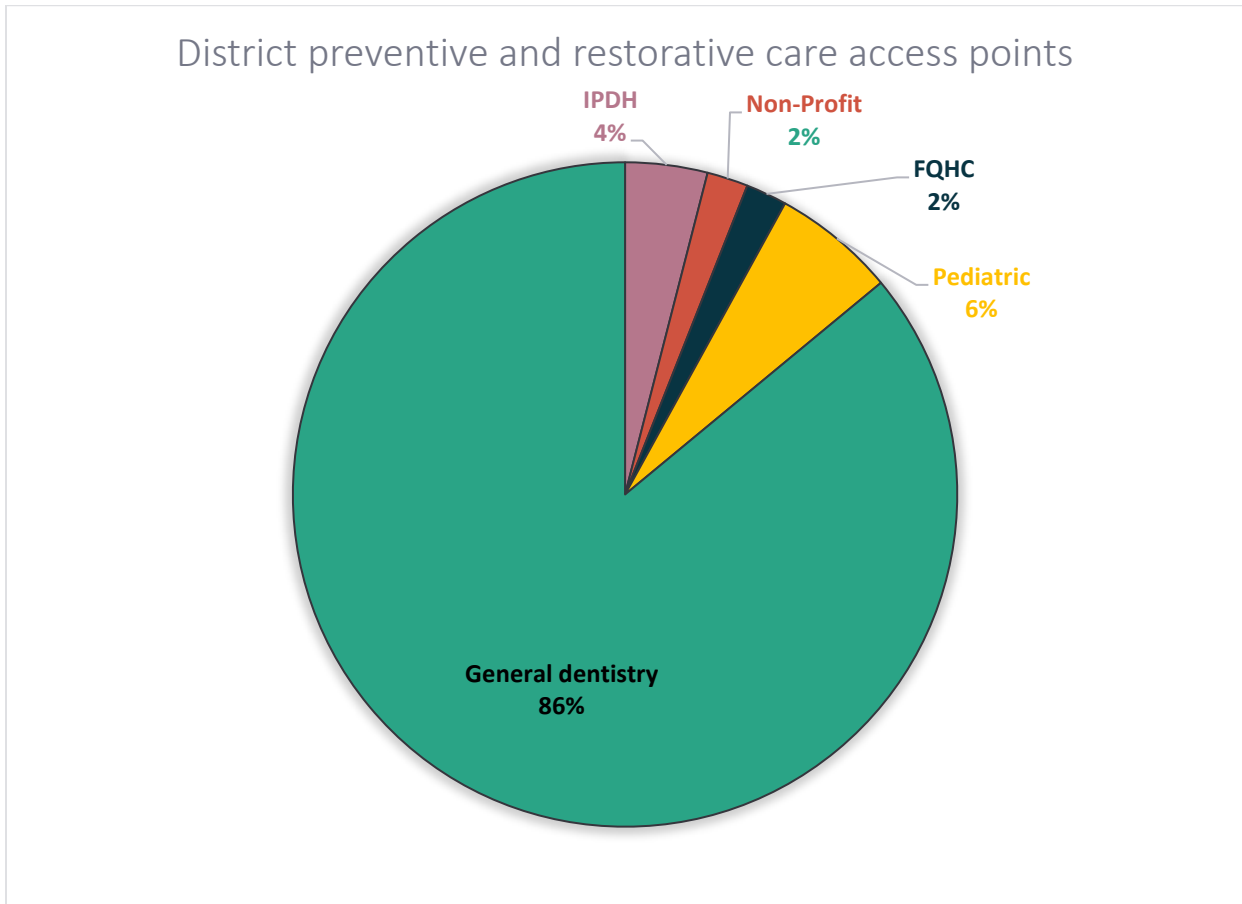




Figure 4. Points of care in the district for preventive and restorative care, by type.



- All 50 points of care were contacted in 2023, with 27 submitting a response to the dental access point survey, including 21 general private practice dental offices, one non-profit dental clinic, two Independent Practice Dental Hygiene (IPDH) offices, two pediatric dental offices, and one FQHC. Of those 27 points of care, 21 reported accepting new patients with only six accepting new pediatric patients with MaineCare insurance, and three accepting both adult and pediatric patients with MaineCare insurance.

Although only seven of the points of care that responded to the survey reported accepting MaineCare, all 27 reported accepting commercial insurance, with 13 being 'in-network' with multiple commercial insurances, 10 being 'in-network' with Delta Dental only, and four not being 'in-network' with any dental insurances at all. While 'out-of-network' offices might accept insurance, it often results in reduced coverage, and patients can expect higher out-of-pocket costs.

- At the points of care locations that are accepting new patients, wait times for new patients with insurance and urgent needs are reported to be a few days to several months.
- The minimum patient age accepted across the points of care that responded to the survey ranges from 0 to 5 years old with the average minimum age being 18 months old.
- In addition to the 50 dental health points of care for preventative and restorative dental care, the region also has four dentist offices, three oral surgery offices, four orthodontic practices, one naval dental clinic, two periodontist offices, and two endodontists. Access to care information for these specialists was not collected.

*Figure 5. Percentage of district survey respondents accepting new patients, by patient type.*

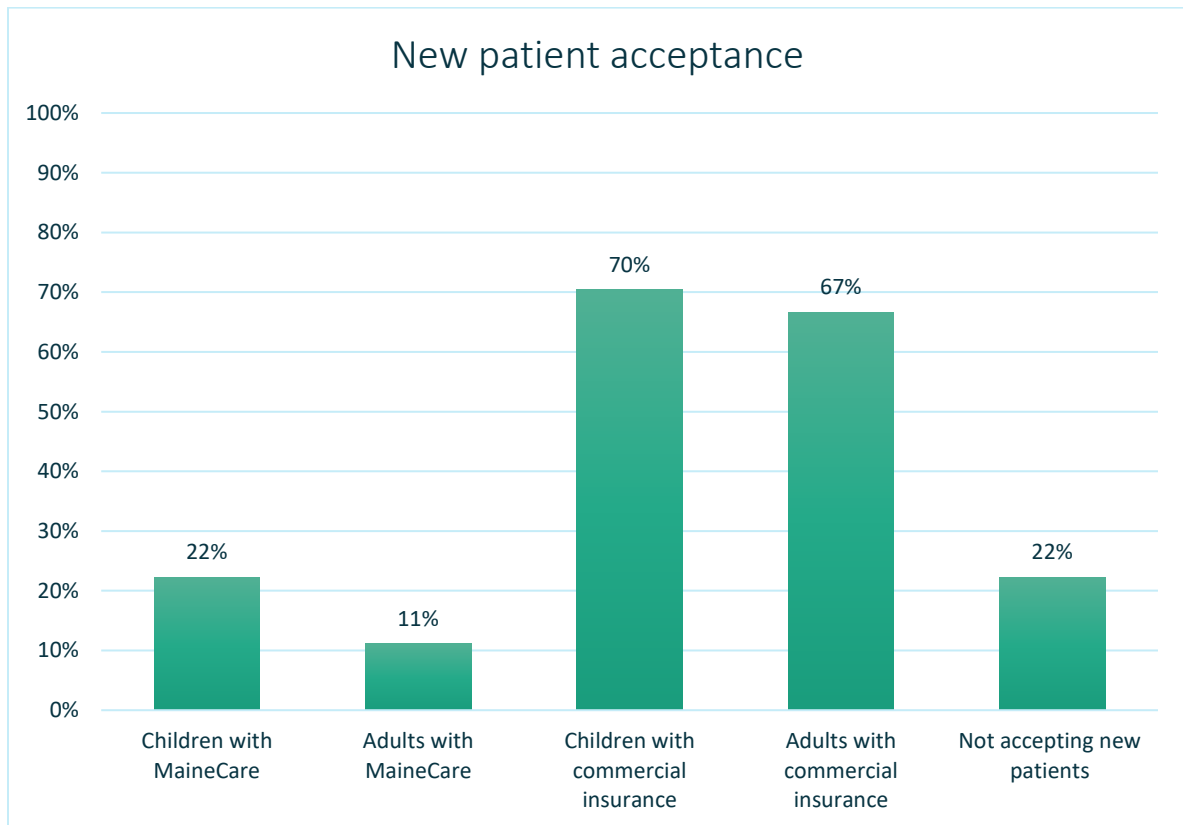


Figure 6. Insurance acceptance among district survey respondents.

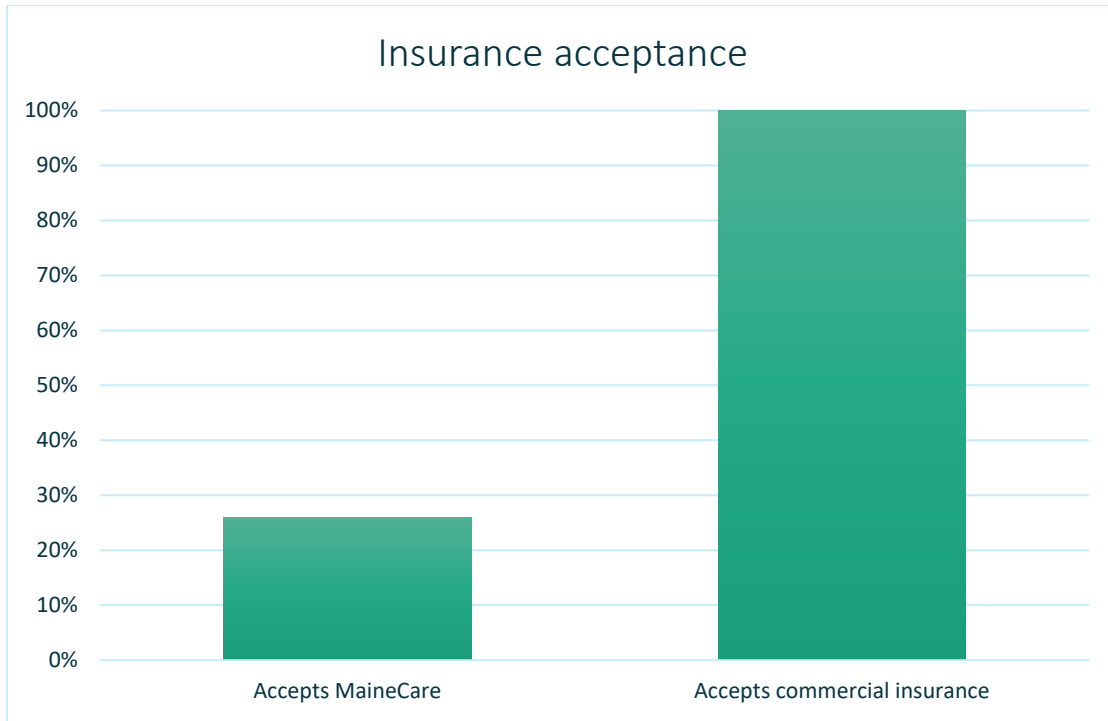


Figure 7. 'In-network' commercial insurance status of district survey respondents who accept commercial insurance.

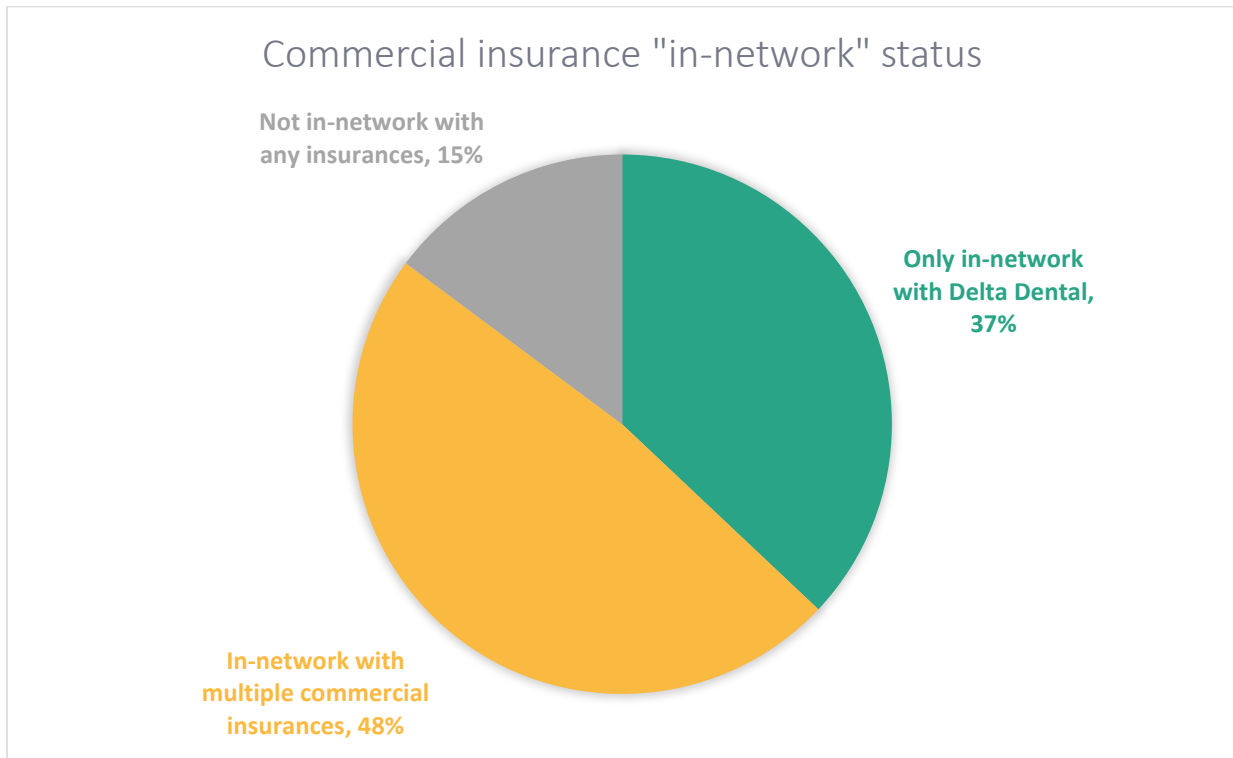
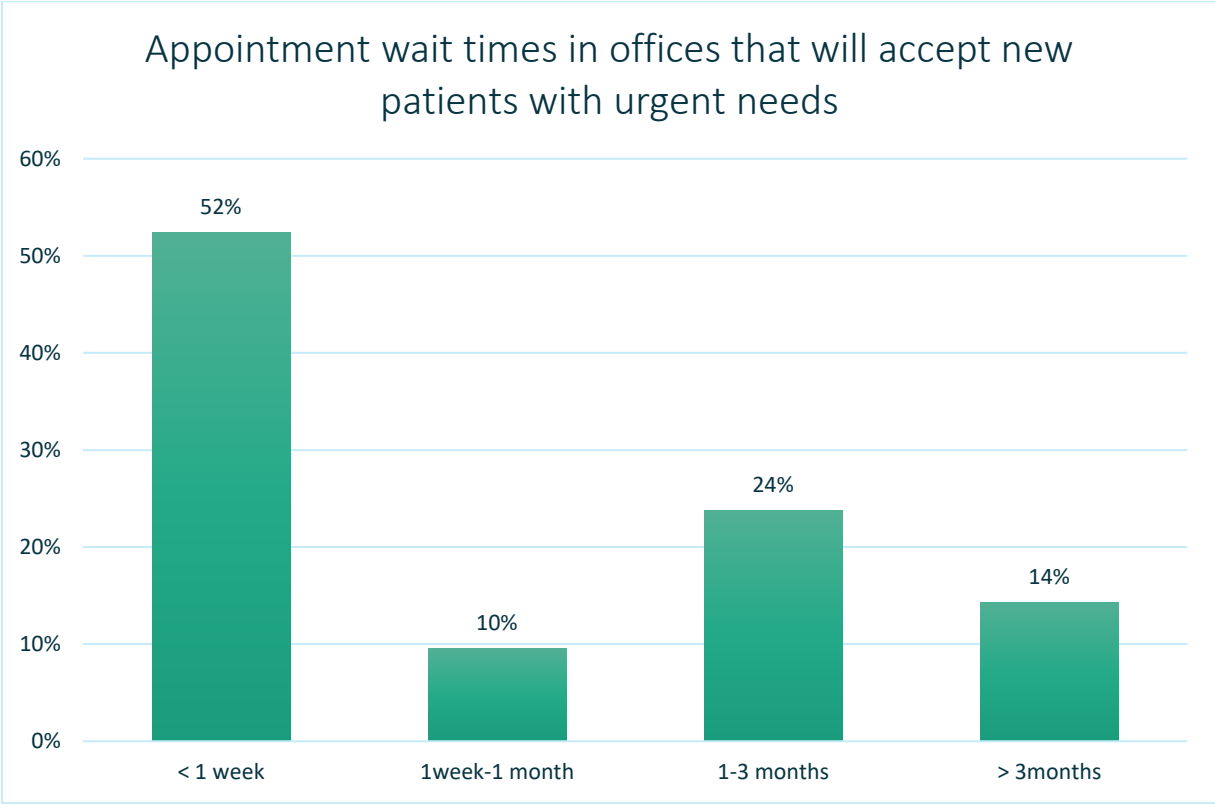


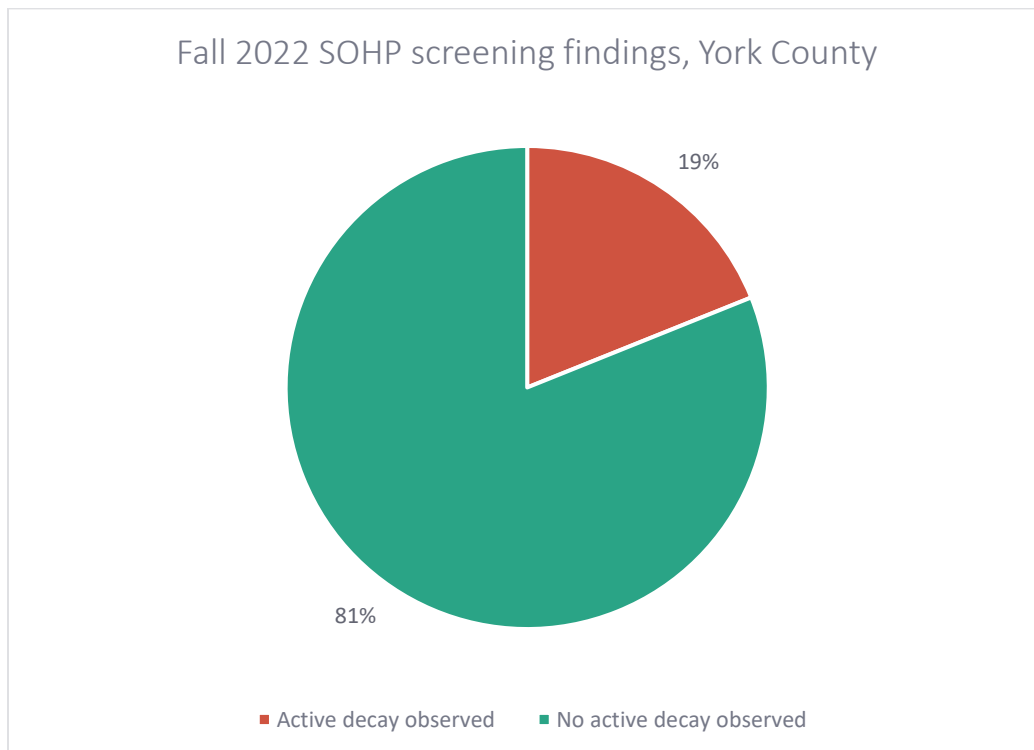
Figure 8. New patient appointment wait time for urgent needs in those district respondents who are accepting new patients.



## Schools

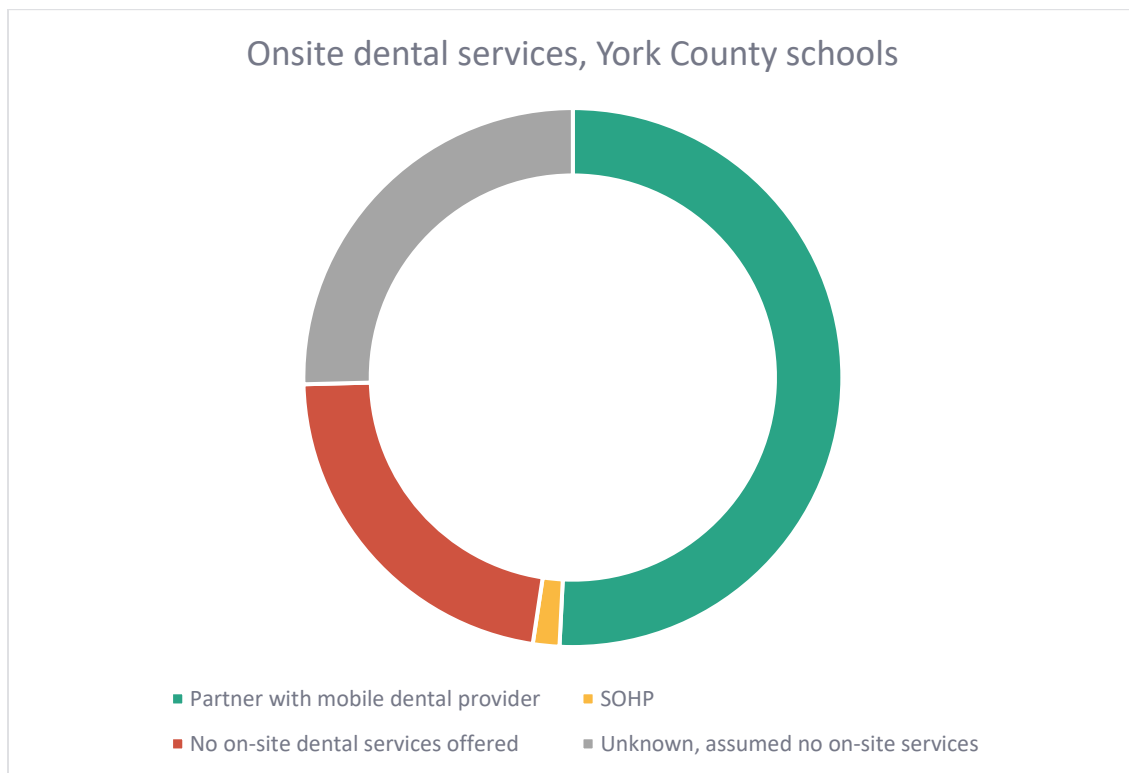
- There are 63 schools in York County, including 37 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, 10 high schools, with one being private, three combined elementary and middle schools, one combined middle and high school, and two pre-kindergarten schools.
- One school in the York Public Health District participated in the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s School [Oral Health Program](#) (SOHP) in fall 2022. Trained professionals contracted by the SOHP conducted oral health screenings, applied fluoride varnish, and provided education and referrals for follow-up care, as needed.
- Collected data showed that of the 37 children from the participating school screened by the SOHP, 19% had active, untreated tooth decay and 11% had decay that had been treated. Of the children identified as having active dental decay, two were classified as having urgent treatment needs, indicating severe decay or infection.

*Figure 9. Fall 2022 SOHP screening findings in York County children in the one participating school.*



- Additionally, 32 schools in York County partners with mobile dental providers to offer onsite preventative services to students, including dental cleanings, radiographs, and non-invasive caries treatments, along with education and referrals for follow-up care, as needed. There are no aggregate data available on the number of children served by these programs.
- One school reported partnering with the University of New England Dental Clinic to provide preventive dental care to their students, and 14 reported that they do not provide any onsite dental services. There are no data for onsite dental service for 16 additional schools in the region.

*Figure 10. Type of onsite dental services offered in York Public Health District schools.*

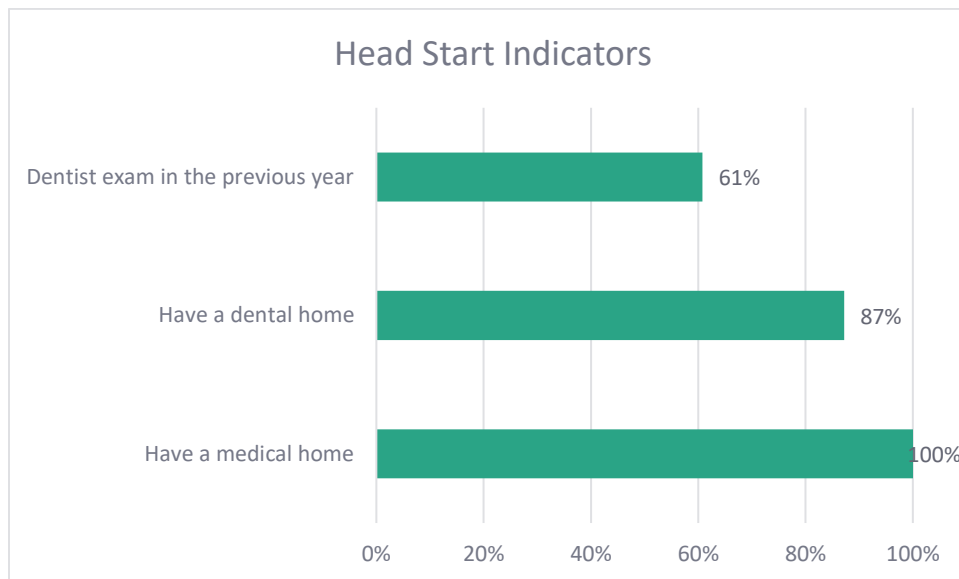


## Head Start

- During the 2022-2023 academic year, there were 128 children in the district enrolled in York County Community Action Corporation’s [Head Start](#) programs. Head Start is a program that prepares children from low-income families from birth to age 5 for school. All the children from York County who enrolled in Head Start programs reported having a [medical home](#), 87% reported having a [dental home](#) and 61% of enrolled children had a dental exam in the previous year.

There is a federal mandate requiring Head Start programs to ensure that all children establish a dental home and receive an exam by a dentist within 90 days of enrolling in the program. This is a historically challenging benchmark to achieve; however, the York Head Start program has a higher success rate than others statewide, due to their relationship with Nasson Dental Clinic, a division of York County Community Action Corporation.

*Figure 11. York Public Health District Head Start indicators, school year 2022-23.*



## Primary Care

- In York County, there are 61 primary care practices, including 10 practices dedicated to pediatric patients. There are two FQHCs in Springvale and Biddeford, and one school-based health center in North Berwick.<sup>3</sup>

Table 3. Primary Care Indicators <sup>3</sup>		
Primary care indicator	York County	State of Maine
Primary care practices	61	463
Sites per 10,000 population	3.1	3.5

- [From the First Tooth](#) (FTFT) is an existing preventive oral health program integrated into many Maine primary care practices. The program focuses on prevention of pediatric oral disease by incorporating oral health risk assessment and application of fluoride varnish into well-child visits from 6 months through 20 years of age.<sup>5</sup> There are 28 primary care practices in the York Public Health District of Maine that treat pediatric patients. Of those, 16 have implemented the FTFT program into their practice.

Figure 12. FTFT adoption in the district primary care practices that serve children.

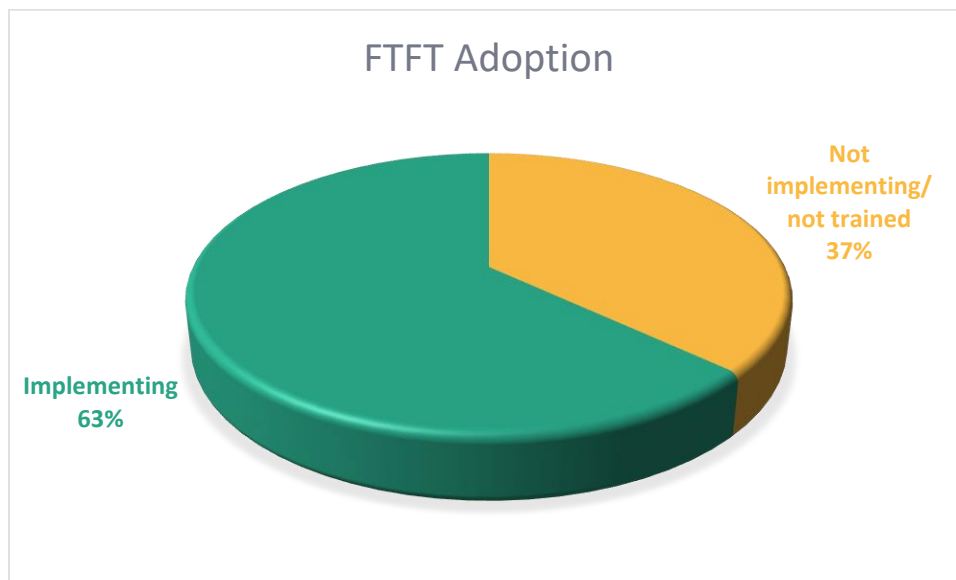
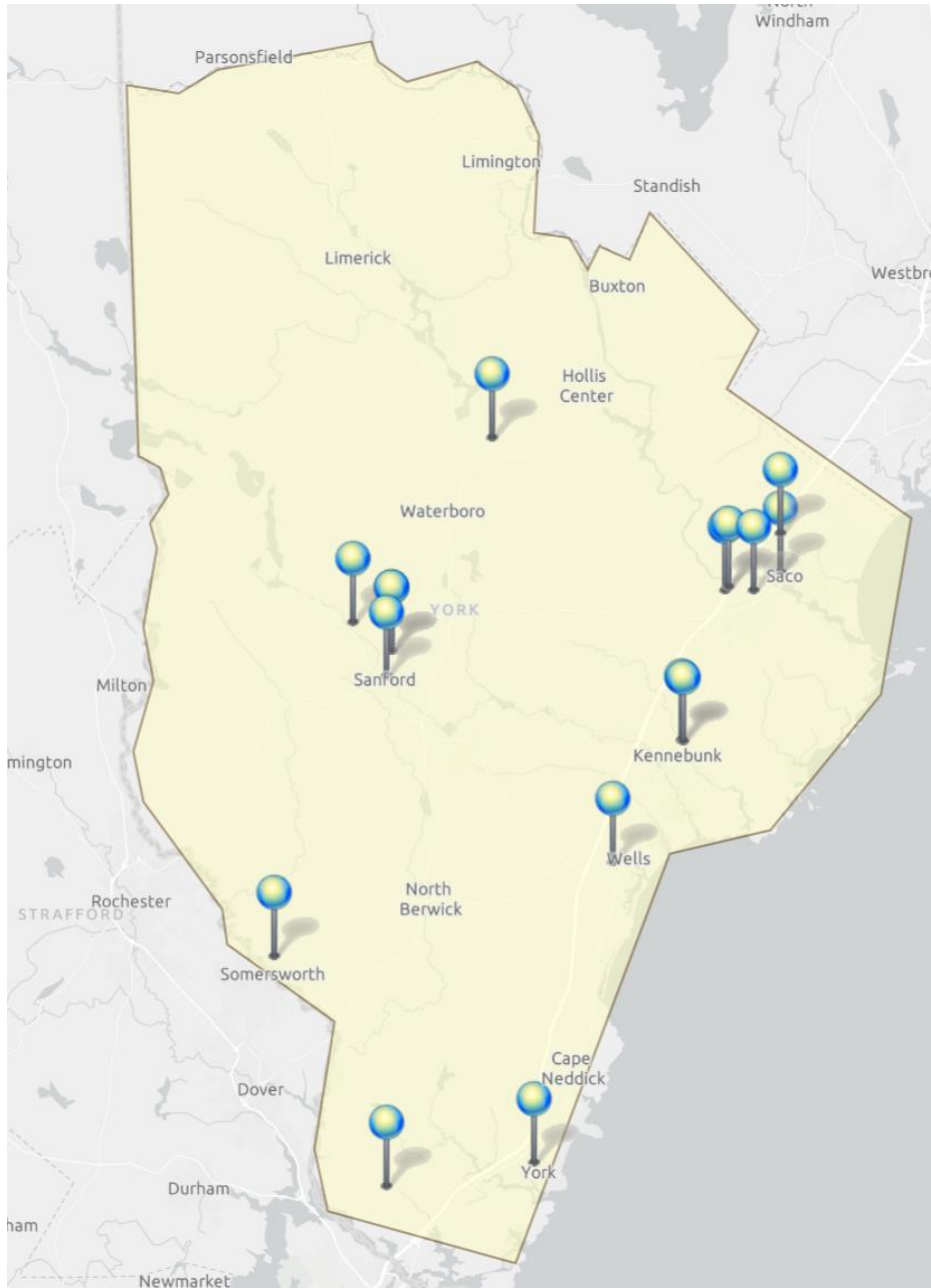




Figure 13. FTFT participation locations in the York Public Health District.



## Utilization

- Based on data from insurance claims<sup>7</sup>, more than half of children covered by MaineCare insurance for at least 11 months out of the year in 2021 did not receive any dental services, and even more did not have any preventive dental claims. The district followed state trends with a drop in services seen at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, York County’s commercially insured children were able to recover service rates faster than the state average, but followed state trends for children covered with MaineCare showing little to no service recovery. Within the district and across the state, there are disparities in access to dental care with fewer children covered by MaineCare receiving dental services.
- The district relies on emergency room (ER) visits for dental care for both adults and children; however, at a lower rate than the state average.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 141. Percentage of insured children with at least one dental claim of any kind.<sup>7</sup>

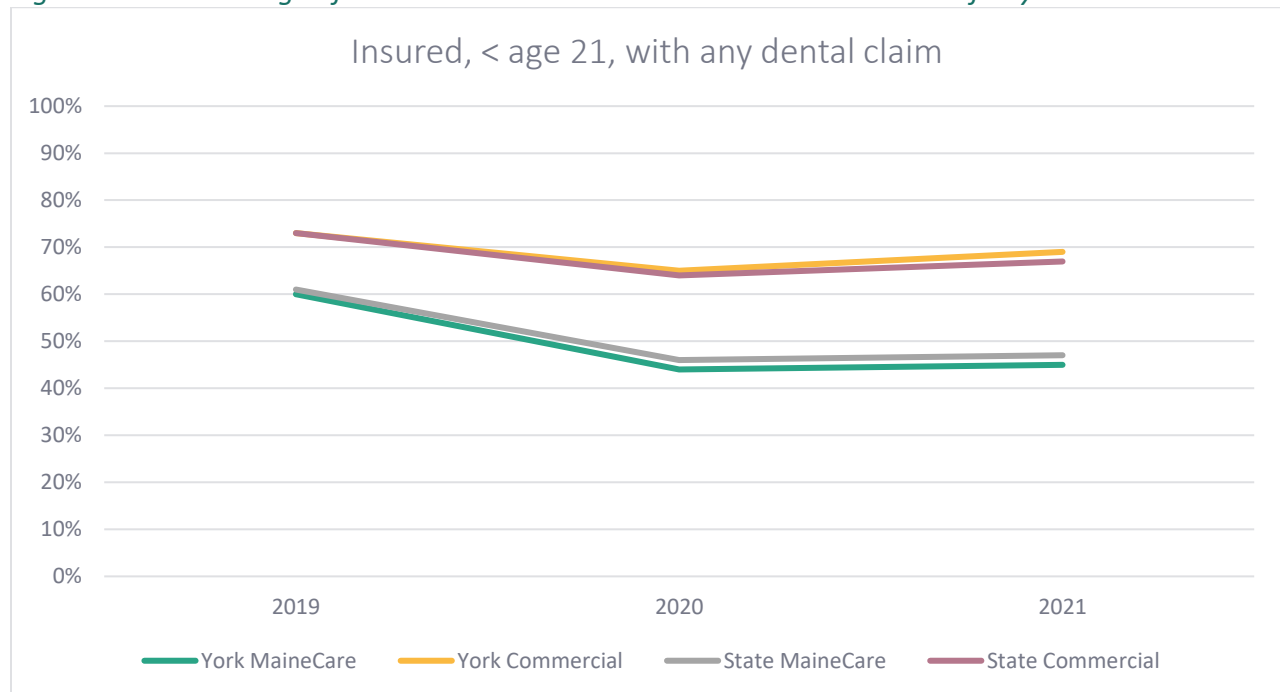


Figure 15. Percentage of insured children with at least one preventive dental claim.<sup>7</sup>

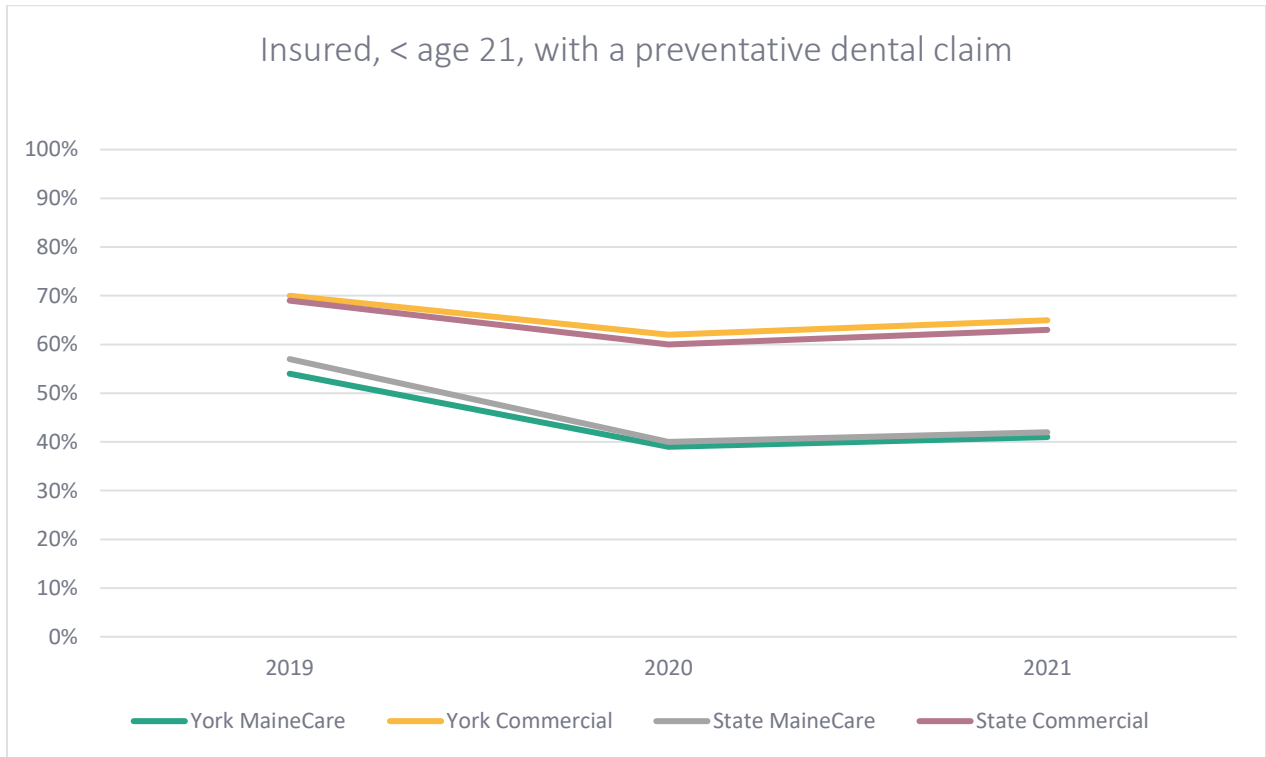


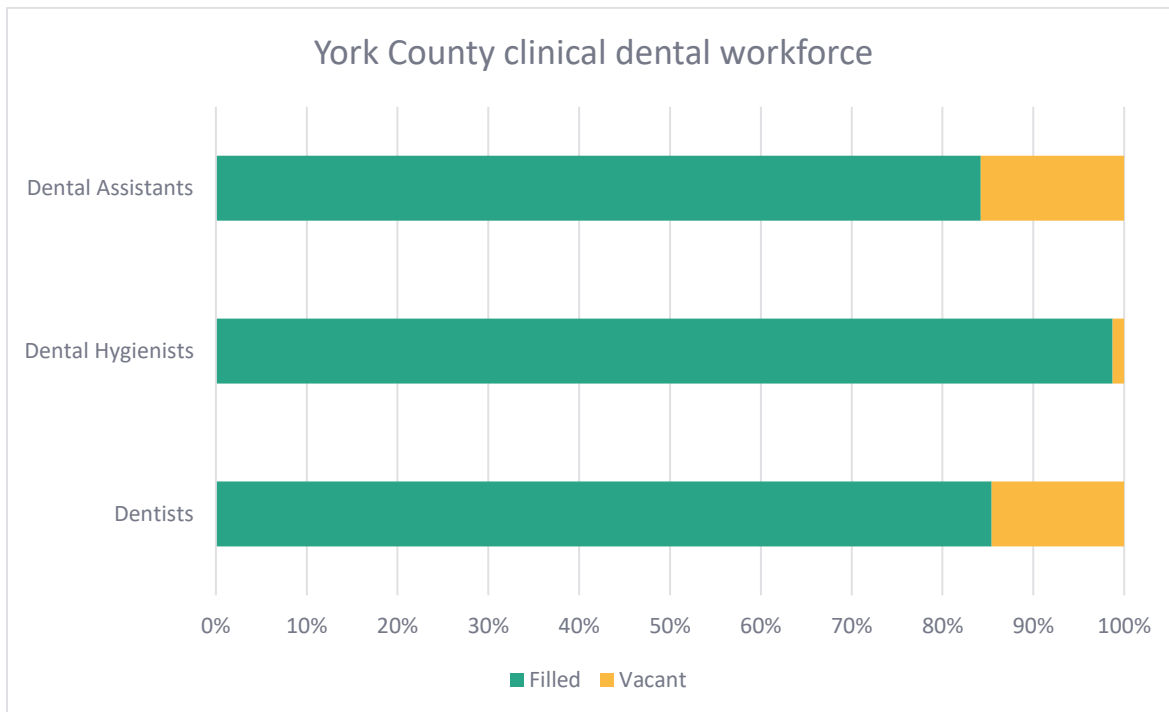
Table 4. Emergency room utilization for dental care <sup>6</sup>		
Indicator	York County	State average
2016–2018 dental emergency department rates for children per 10,000 population	9	17.9
2016–2018 dental emergency department rates for adults per 10,000 population	91.5	136.6

- Source for Figures 14-15: Maine Health Data Organization, All-Payer Claims Database.
- Analysis by USM Cutler Institute for the Children’s Oral Health Network.
- “Insured children” includes children under age 21 who are residents of Maine/the identified county and who were enrolled in either MaineCare or a commercial dental plan for at least 11 months of the identified year.

## Workforce

- Among the 27 points of care that responded to the survey, the existing clinical workforce of 183 members includes 41 practicing dentists, 78 dental hygienists, and 64 dental assistants. In addition to these filled positions, as of August 2023, 20 vacant positions were reported, including seven dentists, one dental hygienist, and 12 dental assistants.

Figure 16. Existing and vacant clinical oral health workforce in district survey respondents.



## Methods

Methods of data collection for this descriptive report included review of existing reports (see reference list), distribution of a dental access point survey, and telephone/email communication with primary care practices, schools, and dental providers. The surveys included questions regarding workforce and access and were distributed in winter 2022–2023 with data collection efforts continuing through August 2023. Each site was contacted multiple times via telephone, email, and social media prior to identifying them as non-responsive. The Children’s Oral Health Network of Maine contacted schools, school-based dental providers, and Head Start agencies in winter 2022–2023. The SOHP and the FTFT program provided current county level data from their respective programs in winter 2022–2023.

Utilization and insurance data was obtained from the Maine Health Data Organization’s (MHDO) All Payer Claims Database (APCD) per the data release requirements defined in 90-590 C.M.R. ch. 120 *Release of Data to the Public*. The MHDO is a state agency that collects health care claims data from payors, including Medicaid, commercial insurance carriers, and dental benefit administrators, per the requirements in 90-590 C.M.R. ch. 243, *Uniform Reporting System for Health Care Claims Data Sets*. Please refer to the [MHDO website](#) for more details regarding data restrictions and participating insurers. These data were analyzed by the USM Cutler Institute for the Children’s Oral Health Network of Maine. For more information, visit <https://www.maineconh.org/assets/stock/2021-COHN-Data-Brief.pdf>

## Data Sources Referenced

1. Maine CDC. 2022. Maine Shared Community Needs Assessment Report. <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/MaineCHNA/documents/county-reports/2022/York%20County%20MSCHNA%20Report%202022.pdf>
2. Maine Children’s Alliance. 2022 County Data Profiles. York County:2022. [https://www.mekids.org/site/assets/files/1993/york\\_kc2022.pdf](https://www.mekids.org/site/assets/files/1993/york_kc2022.pdf)
3. Kahn-Troster S, Burgess A, Coburn A, et al. Maine Rural Health Profiles. 2016. Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, Muskie School, Maine Rural Health Research Center.
4. Info for ME. Maine Counties. 2019. <https://www.maine.gov/sos/kids/government/counties>
5. From the First Tooth. <https://www.fromthefirsttooth.org/>
6. Maine CDC. 2021. Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment. York County Health Profile. <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/MaineCHNA/documents/York%20County%20County%20Health%20Profile%204.8.2022.pdf>
7. Maine Health Data Organization, All-Payer Claims Database. Analysis by USM Cutler Institute for the Children’s Oral Health Network of Maine. <https://www.maineohn.org/assets/stock/2021-COHN-Data-Brief.pdf>