



# Children's Dental Health Survey *Recession Forcing Low-Income Families to Sacrifice Kids' Dental Care*

## **About the Survey**

### **Scope**

A national online poll sponsored by FORBA, conducted May 29-30, 2009, surveyed 210 parents of young children in households with annual incomes of \$35,000 or less. Nashville-based FORBA is the nation's largest dental management company focused on care for children from low-income families. The following includes results and analysis by question.

### **Summary**

The survey found that among respondents:

- Nearly half (44 percent) said they have experienced financial difficulties related to the current economic recession, and have been forced to choose between dental care for their children and other necessities such as food, transportation and housing.
- One in five (20 percent) take their child to the dentist less than once per year, far below the American Dental Association's recommendation of two annual check-ups.
- Approximately 16 percent indicated that their child is uninsured, and more than 40 percent said their family receives government health assistance from such programs as Medicaid and CHIP.
- Approximately 18 percent said they have trouble locating a dentist who will treat their child, a finding that reflects a national problem: in some states, fewer than 1 in 4 dentists will treat children from low-income families that receive Medicaid.

Among the respondents who indicated that the recession had forced financial choices between dental care and other necessities:

- Almost three out of four (74 percent) said their child visits a dentist less than once each year.
- A large majority (86 percent) said they have trouble finding a dentist to treat their children.
- Three out of four (75 percent) said their children are uninsured.

### **Results**

**Question #1:** Do you plan to take your child to the dentist before they return to school in the fall?

Yes: 68%  
No: 32%

**Question #2:** Where do you rank your child's dental health compared to their overall health?

Very Important: 75%  
Somewhat Important: 23%  
Less Important: 1%

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**Question #3:** How often does your child visit the dentist?

Less Than One a Year: 20%  
Once a Year: 31%  
Two or More Times a Year: 49%

**Question #4:** How many times each day does your child brush his/her teeth?

Less Than Once a Day: 12%  
At Least Once a Day: 51%  
Two or More Times a Day: 37%

**Question #5:** Do you have trouble finding a dentist who will treat your child?

Yes: 18%  
No: 82%

**Question #6:** If you have experienced difficulties related to the current economic recession, have you been forced to choose between dental care for your child and other necessities such as food, transportation and housing?

Yes: 44%  
No: 56%

**Question #7:** What best describes the type of health insurance you have for your child?

Commercial or Private Health Insurance: 43%  
Government Health Assistance  
Such as Medicaid, CHIP, etc.: 41%  
My Child is Uninsured: 16%

## Detailed Results for Question #6

<i>Have you had to choose between dental care &amp; other necessities?</i>	<b>How Often Does Your Child Visit the Dentist?</b>			<b>Do you have trouble finding a dentist who will treat your child?</b>		<b>What best describes the type of health insurance you have for your child?</b>		
	<b>&lt; 1 visit per year</b>	<b>1 visit year</b>	<b>2 visits per year</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Commercial /Private*</b>	<b>Government Assistance*</b>	<b>Child is Uninsured</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>73.8%</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>86.1%</b>	<b>35.1%</b>	<b>39.1%</b>	<b>37.2%</b>	<b>75.8%</b>
No	26.2%	4.6%	75.0%	13.9%	64.9%	60.9%	62.8%	24.2%

\* Many respondents indicated using a combination of commercial insurance and government healthcare assistance.