

# **The Burden of Dental Problems on Ohio's Emergency Departments**

Amber Detty, MA, Ohio Department of Health

Julia Kranenburg, MPH candidate, The Ohio State University

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# Presentation Overview

- Background
- Purpose
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusions



# Background

- Many Ohioans cannot afford to go to a private dentist or have difficulty accessing one that will accept their method of payment
  - Individuals may then turn to hospital emergency departments (EDs) to alleviate dental problems
- Most EDs are not staffed with a dentist who can regularly provide definitive care



# Purpose

- To describe the extent that patients in Ohio are utilizing hospital EDs to alleviate dental problems



# Methodology

- Data on hospital visits provided to ODH from Ohio Hospital Association for January 2010 through June 2011
- Data from Ohio Medicaid Claims provided to ODH by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for SFY 2010 and 2011
- ED visit for dental problem defined as:
  - Had a emergency department source code
  - Had an ICD-9 primary diagnosis code consistent with non-trauma related dental pain and infection (included in groups 521-523; 525; 873)

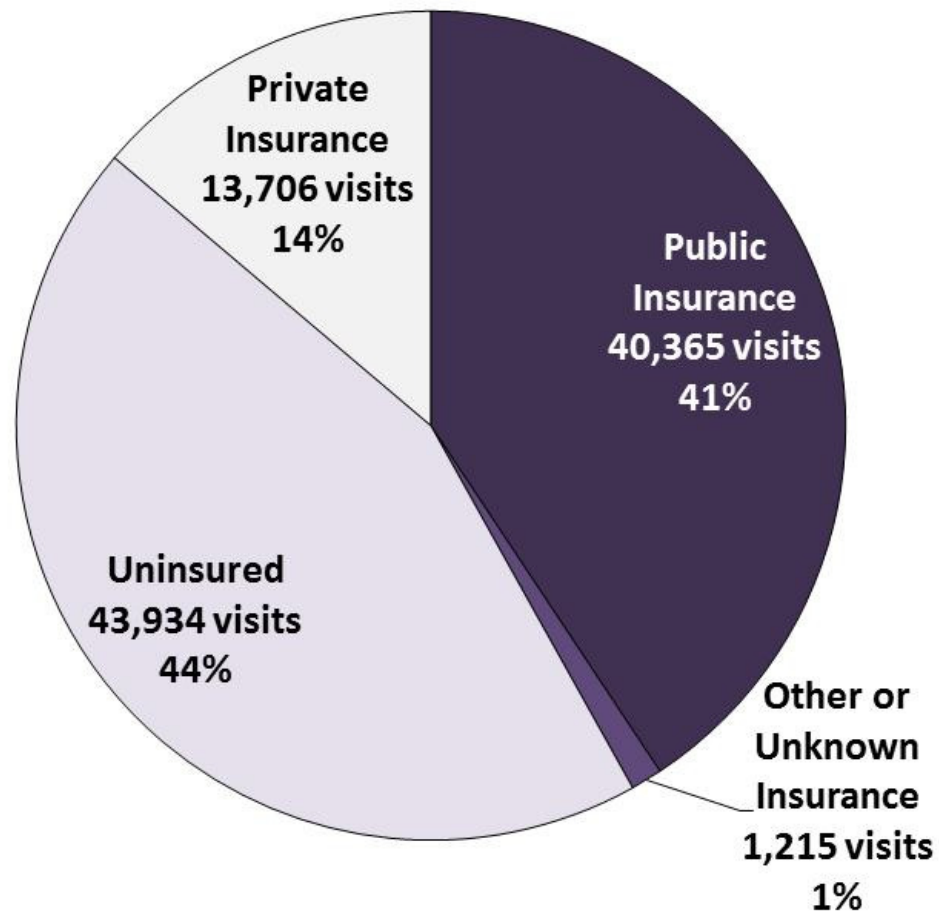


# Results – The Basics, All Patients

- Over 100,000 visits to the ED for primary dental diagnosis over an 18-month period totaling just over \$58 million in hospital charges
  - Roughly 200 visits and \$100,000 in charges per day statewide
  - Most occurred on weekdays (69%)
  - Most visits were by patients age 22-44 years (57%)
  - Higher rate of utilization among non-Hispanic blacks (19% versus 12% in the population)
  - Most visits were by patients who were uninsured or insurance through public coverage



## Source of Payment for Dental ED Visits in Ohio, 2010-11



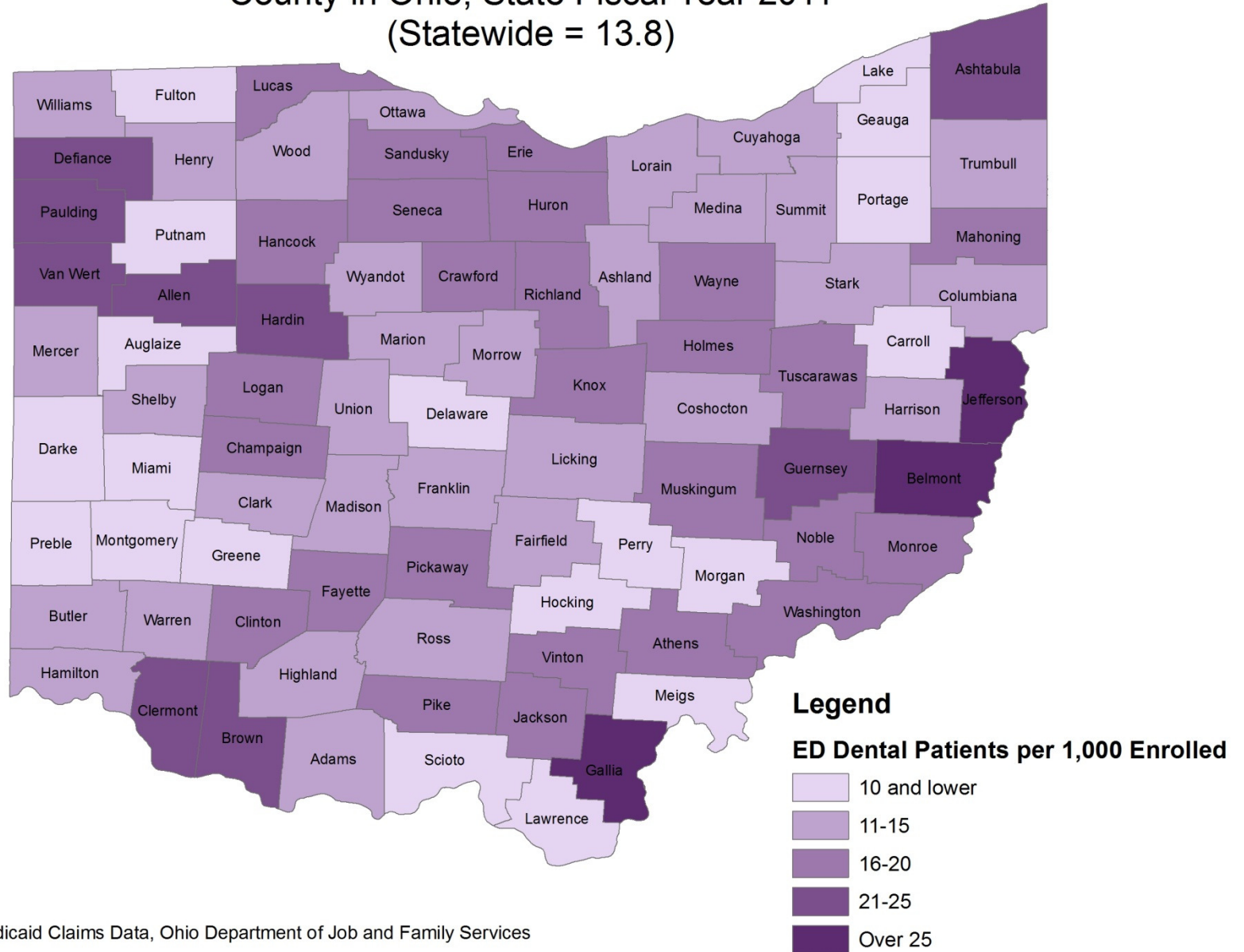
## Results – The Basics, Patients Covered by Medicaid

- About 23 percent of patients covered by Medicaid with an ED visit for dental problems had multiple visits to an Ohio ED for dental problems
- Dental problems represent just under 4% of all patients covered by Medicaid who sought care in an Ohio ED





# Rate of Emergency Department Visits for Non-Traumatic Dental Problems for Patients Covered by Medicaid by County in Ohio, State Fiscal Year 2011 (Statewide = 13.8)



Data Source: Ohio Medicaid Claims Data, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

# Conclusions and Implications

- Many patients in Ohio are seeking to alleviate dental problems in hospital EDs
- Most are uninsured or publically insured
- There appear to be demographic and geographic differences in utilization
  - Need to further explore if geographical differences are associated with:
    - Lack of nearby primary care dental providers
    - Lack of nearby primary care dental providers who serve low-income patients
    - Other demographic and socioeconomic indicators



# Conclusions – Strengths and Weaknesses

- Strengths
  - Relies on two sources of data
    - Data is relatively consistent between sources
  - Methodology is consistent with other studies
- Weaknesses
  - Relies on physician diagnostic coding and hospital data reporting
  - Data on all patients provided by the Ohio Hospital Association does not provide patient nor hospital identifiers
  - Information on cost/charges not available through Medicaid claims data



# Contact Information

Amber M.R. Detty, MA  
Researcher

Oral Health Section

Bureau of Community Health Services & Patient-Centered  
Primary Care

Ohio Department of Health

614-644-9598

[Amber.Detty@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:Amber.Detty@odh.ohio.gov)

