

# Access to Healthcare



# ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Access to care is affected by a number of different factors including the number of healthcare facilities and providers in an area and the availability and affordability of healthcare.

According to the County Guide, in 2006 there were 583 persons per physician in Cobb County compared to Georgia at 494 persons per physician.

## ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE

In 2008, more Georgia physicians provided specialty care than primary care. The Georgia County Guide 2010 reports that 34% of Cobb County physicians are considered primary care physicians (family practice, internal medicine and pediatrics), an adequate percentage for the county.

The Georgia Health Disparities Report 2008 compares 32 counties in Georgia, including Cobb, on a number of important health issues including access to care. Letter grades were assigned to the counties based on various criteria. Cobb County received the following letter grades.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Access to Care Category</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>B</b>	Access to Primary Care Providers	The Report designates Cobb as a "partial-county health professional shortage area." Eleven of the 32 counties received an A.
<b>B</b>	Primary Care Safety Net	Cobb County residents have access to a federally qualified community health center, which provides primary care to residents.
<b>C</b>	Health Professional Diversity	Measure of the black and Latino physicians per 100,000 black and Latino population. The Cobb rate is 74.0 minority physicians per 100,000 population. Even though Cobb's rate is higher than many of the 32 counties studied, it is still much lower than the rate for white physicians. Often residents from minority races prefer to see physicians of their own race.

# ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

## ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE

Regular oral healthcare improves overall health. It also leads to the early treatment, diagnosis and prevention of oral diseases including oral cancer. Routine cleanings are recommended every 6 months for adults and children and have been shown to decrease incidence of plaque and gingivitis. Dental infections can rapidly spread to other parts of the body causing serious infections and illness.

According to the American Dental Hygienists' Association, 40% of Americans are not receiving the recommended dental care. A significant factor inhibiting access to care is the ability to pay for dental services. Another important inhibiting factor is the lack of sufficient numbers of dentists practicing in rural and inner-city areas. Fortunately, according to the Georgia Health Disparities Report 2008, Cobb County is *not* a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area.

**Table 3-1: Percent of Adult Residents who Visited a Dentist or a Dental Clinic within the Past Year (2002, 2006 and 2008)**

Location	2002	2006	2008
Cobb	77.1 %	74.9 %	77.8 %
Georgia	67.0 %	70.7 %	71.8 %

Source: BRFSS

- Of Cobb County adult residents who took the survey, 77.8% said that they had visited the dentist or dental clinic in the past year. This is compared to 71.8% in Georgia. Percentages have not increased since 2002 and actually decreased in 2006 from 2002.
- The percentage from the 2008 survey is expected to decrease in 2010 due to the poor economy and unemployment rates.

## HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Residents must have access to healthcare providers and facilities. Table 3-2 shows the number of facilities available in Cobb County.

**Table 3-2 : Healthcare Facilities Cobb County, 2008**

Hospitals	Hospital Beds	Nursing Homes	Nursing Home Beds	Trauma Centers
4	1218	13	1741	0*

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health

\*WellStar Kennestone Hospital applied for trauma center designation in 2010. The Metropolitan Atlanta area has three adult and two pediatric trauma centers.

### Did you know...

CDPH provides dental services for children ages 2 -20 as long as they are still in school. These services include dental screenings, composite fillings, sealants, cleanings, fluoride treatments, stainless steel crowns, pulpomies, and extractions. We also provide extractions for adults during limited hours. Acceptable payment methods are PeachCare, Medicaid and cash.

Call us at  
**770-514-2372.**



## INSURANCE COVERAGE

Health insurance coverage has a profound effect on access to care. Those without health insurance are less likely to have regular medical care and are more likely to go without care. In Georgia, Medicaid and PeachCare are available to provide health insurance coverage for children and adults who are low income or disabled. Medicare is available to seniors over age 65. Table 3-3 shows the percentage of uninsured population in Cobb County.

**Table 3-3: Uninsured Residents Cobb County, 2008**

Cobb County	Number	Percent of Population
<b>Uninsured Population</b>	107,019	15.4%
<b>Under 18 years</b>	18,740	2.7%
<b>18 to 64 years</b>	87,308	12.6%
<b>65 years or over</b>	971	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Uninsured Facts

- Cobb County has an uninsured population of 15.4% of the total county population.
- The largest percentage of uninsured population falls in the 18 – 64 age group. Persons included in this group exceed the maximum income level allowed to qualify for Medicaid but often cannot afford to pay for healthcare.
- The Georgia Health Disparities Report 2008 gave Cobb County a grade of C on the uninsured as percent of total population. The median percentage for the 32 Georgia counties in the report was 14.8%.

## PAYOR SOURCES

### MEDICAID

The Medicaid program in Georgia provides healthcare for children, pregnant women, and people who are low income, aged, blind and disabled. Table 3-4 shows the average number of members and payment for Georgia Medicaid in 2008. Averaging membership over the year is necessary because persons enroll in and are dropped from the plan throughout the year.

**Table 3-4: Medicaid Member Average and Payment, 2008**

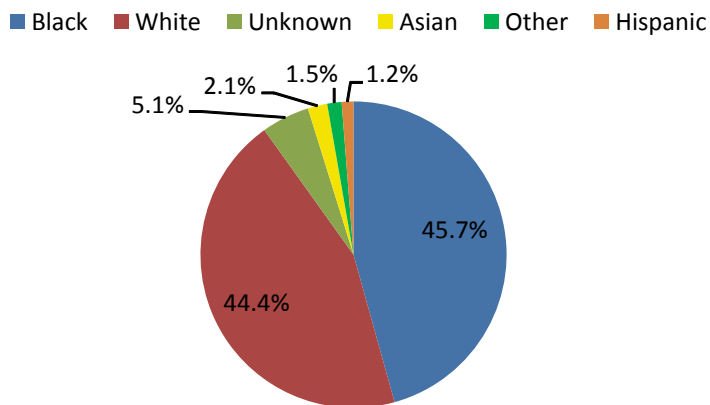
Location	Average Number of Members	Total Net Payment	Average Payment per Member
<b>Cobb</b>	48,645	\$172,101,474	\$5,209
<b>Georgia</b>	1,260,519	\$4,515,345,997	\$5,005

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health

- Cobb County residents made up 3.9% of the Georgia Medicaid members in 2008.
- The annual Medicaid payment per Cobb County member was slightly higher than payment per Georgia member.
- There are approximately equal proportions of white and black populations who are Medicaid members in Cobb County.

# ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

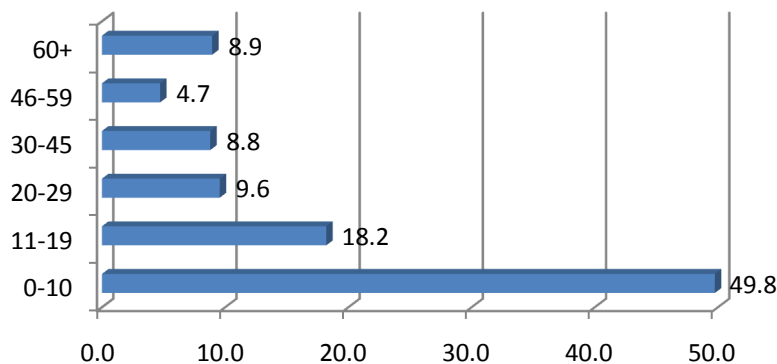
**Figure 3-1: Medicaid Members by Race/Ethnicity  
Cobb County, 2008**



The black and white populations used Medicaid almost equally, however whites comprise 70.1% of the total population in Cobb County and blacks make-up 23.3%.

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health

**Figure 3-2: Percent Medicaid Members by  
Age Cobb County, 2008**



## Medicaid Facts

- Most Medicaid users in Cobb County are between 0-10 years of age.
- A Medicaid membership is established for eligible infants in the hospital after birth.

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health

## PEACHCARE FOR KIDS™

In 1997, Congress created Title XXI of the Social Security Act to provide healthcare for the growing number of uninsured children in the United States. This legislation provided states with the opportunity to create programs to increase children's access to affordable health insurance. In Georgia, this program is PeachCare for Kids™.

# ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

In 1999, PeachCare for Kids™ began covering comprehensive healthcare to children through the age of 18 who do not qualify for Medicaid and live in households with incomes at or below 235% of the federal poverty level. This means a family of three can earn \$43,029 a year and a family of four can earn \$51,818 a year (March 2010 figures). Georgia ranks fourth highest nationally in number of enrolled children. Table 3-5 shows the average number of members and payment breakdowns for this program during 2008. Averaging membership over the year is necessary because children enroll in and are dropped from the plan throughout the year.

**Table 3-5: PeachCare for Kids Member Average and Payment, 2008**

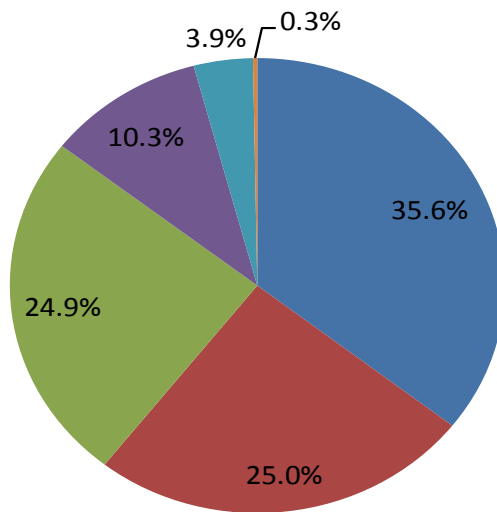
Location	Average Number of Members	Total Net Payment	Payment per Member
Cobb	16,751	\$1,667,736	\$1,320
Georgia	250,094	\$22,624,379	\$1,399

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health

- Cobb County children made up 6.7% of the member average in 2008.
- The annual PeachCare payment per Cobb County child was slightly below that for all Georgia children.

**Figure 3-3: PeachCare Members by Race/Ethnicity Cobb County, 2008**

■ Black ■ White ■ Hispanic ■ Unknown ■ Asian ■ Other



**THE HIGHEST PROPORTION OF PEACHCARE MEMBERS ARE BLACK (35.6%) FOLLOWED BY WHITE (25%) AND THEN HISPANIC (24.9%).**

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health

## MEDICARE

Medicare is health insurance for people age 65 or older, under 65 with certain disabilities, and any age with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).

- Cobb County had 59,478 residents enrolled in Medicare in 2007-2008.
- Cobb County Medicare enrollees received \$570,421,000 in benefits, which represented 6% of Georgia Medicare payments in 2007 – 2008.

