

Impact of Health Problems

Maternal and Child Health Fact Sheet

The Problem

Children with special health care needs are children who have chronic physical, developmental or behavioral conditions. About 17 percent of all children fit this criteria. These children usually require much more frequent health care visits and other services than do healthy children. Chronic health conditions can impact the child and his or her family in a number of ways.



North Dakota Statistics ~ 1999

The Children's Special Health Services Unit (CSHS) in the North Dakota Department of Human Services directly serves about 1,800 children and their families each year. The following data represents information obtained from the 438 families who responded to a 1999 survey:

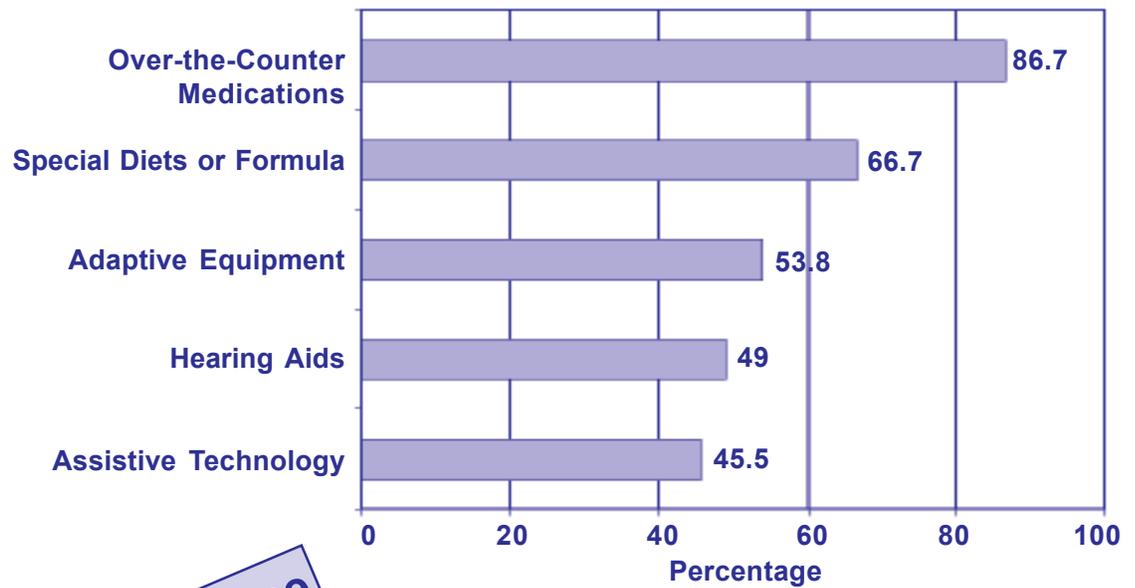
- Within the past year, 67.6 percent of these children saw a medical specialist; 27.2 percent were admitted to the hospital and 13 percent visited the emergency room.
- Twenty-one percent received speech/language therapy and 15 percent received physical therapy. The majority of children received therapy more than once each week.
- More than one-third (36.3 percent) of the children required prescription medications, and nearly one-fourth (23.7 percent) required hearing aids or eyeglasses.

The Effects

Nearly three in 10 parents surveyed said that having a child with special health needs affected their employment. Most said they had given up a paying job, had accepted a lower-paying job with more flexibility or fewer demands, or had not changed jobs to avoid losing benefits.

A child's health condition can effect his or her family financially. About one-third of families indicated that they could not pay for the costs of their child's health care concern and that the amount they paid out of pocket had been a financial hardship. Even with a source of insurance, many costs are paid only partially or not at all by the child's health insurance plan.

Percentage of Families Who Paid for All or Part of the Cost of Related Health Care Services



The Response

The Children's Special Health Services Unit (CSHS) has developed a plan to address the impact of health problems. CSHS can pay for the costs of diagnostic procedures for potentially eligible medical conditions. For children financially eligible for services, CSHS often can pay for medication, therapy, equipment and supplies related to the child's medical condition. In addition, CSHS works with public and private insurers, families, and county and state agencies to maximize health insurance coverage and benefits.

Data Sources:

- 1999 Children's Special Health Services Family Needs Assessment Survey
- Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau
- North Dakota Medical Services Directory, North Dakota Medical Association

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