Between 2005 and 2011, the number of children covered by Medicaid increased by nearly 11% to 32 million. During the same period, children on Medicaid getting psychotropic medications increased by 28%.

Over 2.1 million children in Medicaid received psychotropic medications in 2011. Prescribing rates were distributed, by age, as follows:

- 0-5 yrs. old: 8%
- 6-12 yrs. old: 52%
- 13-18 yrs. old: 39%

And almost one-third (30%) are getting more than one of these medications — 47% for children in foster care.

Psychotropic medication expenditures increased by 70% for children in Medicaid between 2005 and 2011. That is an increase of over $1 billion in expenditures — from $1.6 billion to $2.7 billion.

Of the over 2.1 million children receiving these medications, nearly half (47%) did not receive accompanying behavioral services.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STATES TO IMPROVE QUALITY

- Expand access to a comprehensive array of psycho-social interventions
- Implement clinically informed oversight and monitoring for assessing the appropriateness of care
- Establish data-sharing agreements across agencies to monitor medication use


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