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September 2024

## **Maryland Department of Health 2022-2023 Children's Oral Health Survey Summary Report Released**

*Executive summary captures findings from regional assessment of students*



The Maryland Department of Health recently released an executive summary report on the findings from the 2022-2023 Children's Oral Health Survey. The survey focuses on assessing the oral health status of Maryland school children in kindergarten and third grade. Previous surveys were conducted in 2015-2016, 2011-2012, 2005-2006, and 2000.



Implemented in partnership with the Howard University College of Dentistry, the Maryland Department of Health, Office of Oral Health 2022-2023 Maryland Oral Health Survey of School Children was conducted between January 2022 and December 2023, to assess the oral health status of public and public charter school children in kindergarten and third grade. As with previous surveys,

licensed dentists and dental hygienists conducted in-school, non-invasive oral assessments. The survey results will inform the development of effective interventions to improve children's oral health in Maryland and be critically important to evaluation and review of results to date on goals and objectives in the Maryland Oral Health Plan.

Key areas of assessing the oral health status of school children for the survey include dental decay experience, untreated dental decay, sealant on first permanent molars, sealants needed, early follow-up needed, and urgent dental care needed. In several instances, survey results reveal a concerning downward trend in the oral health status of Maryland children when compared to results from the previous survey and reinforces the need to further emphasize and support efforts to expand access to preventive dental services, increase the number of practicing dentists in underserved areas and enhance public health initiatives on oral health education.

Limitations faced during the 2022-2023 Children's Oral Health Survey included the COVID-19 pandemic and its possible impact on response rates and participation due to various factors such as parental concerns about in-person activities.

[Read the summary of the results.](#)

The full report is available [here](#).

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## **Maryland Department of Health/Office of Oral Health Releases 2023 Legislative Report**

*Highlights efforts to address oral health safety net programs and access to care*

The Maryland Medicaid Program and the Maryland Department of Health, Office of Oral Health recently submitted the annual legislative report to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly on efforts to improve oral health in Maryland.

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) focuses its oral health improvement efforts to address gaps in oral health literacy, improve disease prevention, and increase availability and access to quality dental care in Maryland. This report assesses the State's oral health initiatives in CY 2022, prior to the launch of the Maryland Medical Assistance – Dental Coverage for Adults expansion program, and when the state was still recovering from the significant number of disruptions to operations MDH programs were experiencing due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the report focuses on CY 2022 activities, it is noted in the report that Medicaid has seen increases in the number of providers and in utilization of dental care since the introduction of the Adult Dental Expansion. MDAC anticipates additional information, and data, on Medicaid adult dental expansion program in the 2024 Legislative Report, which captures impact of state oral health initiatives in CY2023. The report is written and currently under review prior to submission and public release.

[Read the report to learn more about 2022 oral health accomplishments in Maryland.](#)

## Medicaid Adult Dental Expansion Reaches over 240K Marylanders So Far

*What impacts have you seen? Information is critical to further expansion and progress*

After the passage of historic legislation, adults enrolled in Medicaid began receiving dental services in January 2023. After nineteen months, we have seen great success with the program! Every month we continue to see growth in both the number of adult Medicaid members receiving care, as well as the number of dental providers submitting claims to Medicaid.

**As of September 17, 2024, over 240,000 adult Medicaid members have received dental care through the Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program.<sup>1</sup> This represents approximately 30% of the eligible Medicaid adult enrollees.**

<sup>2</sup> Forty-nine percent of Medicaid members receiving dental care in 2024 did not receive dental care in 2023 through the program. Therefore, 51% of Medicaid members who have received care are having multiple dental visits over the 19-month period since the program's launch, indicating that these members are establishing "dental homes," a significant goal in the Maryland Oral Health Plan.

Thank you to the dental providers who been participating in the Maryland Healthy Smiles Program and caring for this patient population who has not had access to comprehensive dental care since 1993! We also extend gratitude to the oral health advocates who have worked hard to raise awareness about the Maryland Healthy Smiles Program for adult Medicaid members and have helped members connect to dental care services.

While there is much to celebrate, we acknowledge that there are barriers to participating in the program, including the lack of coverage for dentures and lower reimbursement rates than private insurances. MDAC is continuing to advocate for these and other improvements to the Maryland Healthy Smile Program.



**What impacts have you seen over the 19 months since the expansion to adults was implemented?** What are barriers you are seeing for your clients accessing oral health? MDAC wants to hear from you!

**[Take a few minutes to share your thoughts in this survey](#)** or contact Arin Ahlum Hanson, MDAC's Director of Programs, to set up a time to chat at [ahanson@mdac.us](mailto:ahanson@mdac.us)

1: Office of Maryland Medicaid, Maryland Department of Health, Email correspondence on August 29, 2024.  
2 : Hilltop Institute, Public Dataport, [https://www.hilltopinstitute.org/public-dataport/#pac\\_dtm\\_child\\_1](https://www.hilltopinstitute.org/public-dataport/#pac_dtm_child_1),  
Accessed on Sept 6, 2024

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## State of Oral Health Equity in America 2024

*Key Findings from the 2024 Survey by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health*



[CareQuest Institute for Oral Health's](#) annual State of Oral Health Equity in America survey is the largest nationally representative survey focused on adults' attitudes, experiences, and behaviors related to oral health. The 2024 survey is the largest yet, gathering responses from more than 9,000 adults in the US.

An infographic capturing results of this annual assessment highlights some initial key findings, which include:

- More than two-thirds of adults (68%) report seeing a dentist in the prior year.
- Adults earning \$100K or more per year report planning to seek dental care in greater numbers (93%) than those earning less than \$30K per year (73%).
- Approximately 4% of adults report seeking dental care in an emergency department (ED) in the past year.
- Adults with less than a high school education were nine times more likely to report seeking dental care through an ED than those with a postgraduate or professional degree.

An in-depth, comprehensive report with additional findings from the survey will be available in the future. [Access to the full infographic can be found here.](#)

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## Integrating Oral Health Care and Primary Care Learning Collaborative

*Maryland participates in program featuring successful state and local partnership*

The National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center recently released a report that describes programmatic efforts to integrate oral health care and prenatal care with both a state and a local component in 9 states, including Maryland. [Review the report here.](#)



National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center

Project teams consisted of members from state oral health programs and local community health centers. The state component focused on assessing and action planning to improve systems-level capacity for integrating oral health care and prenatal care. The local component focused on integrating oral health care and prenatal care at the CHC level. The project was implemented from 2022 through 2024. The report discusses project team selection, the state-level approach, the local-level approach, use of stipend funds and in-kind support, and integration of interprofessional oral health core clinical competencies into prenatal care at the participating clinic site.

The report's [executive summary](#) is also available separately.

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## **Building a legacy: Dr. Natalia Chalmers on her work at CMS**

*Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Chief Dental Officer Featured in ADA News*

The September 11, 2024 edition of ADA News includes a feature article on Dr. Natalia Chalmers, the first-ever Chief Dental Officer in the Office of the Administrator at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. As MDAC gratefully recollects, Dr. Chalmers was the lead research analyst for 2017 MDAC/DentaQuest study on the *Financial Impact of Emergency Department Visits by Adults for Dental Conditions in Maryland*. Her presentation to the Maryland House Health and Government Operations and Senate Finance Committees on key findings from the report, coupled with MDAC's advocacy efforts, were key to the passage of legislation that established the Medicaid Adult Dental Pilot Program, and subsequently, Maryland Medical Assistance – Dental Coverage for Adults. Dr. Chalmers was also an active member of the MDAC Medicaid Adult Dental Collaborative, where she made substantial contributions to the success of MDAC's work and the waiver program.



In her role as CMS's chief dental officer, Dr. Chalmers continues to advance her commitment to care for the whole person, a key to reducing health disparities and advancing health equity. [Read the full article here.](#)

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## **Maryland Rural Health Association to Hold Annual Conference**

*MDAC Session will address workforce issues in rural Maryland*

The Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) Annual Conference will be held November 3-5 at the Crown Plaza Hotel, Annapolis. Once again, MDAC is very proud to be a sponsor of this informative and important convening of health executives and staff, community and public health partners, academia, nonprofit advocates and critical support services administrators and coordinators. This year's theme is *Ideas to Action: Innovative Strategies for a Healthier Rural Maryland*.

In a recent [American Journal of Managed Care article](#), author Maggie L. Shaw addresses 5 areas of specialty care that rural communities often lack, putting them at a distinct disadvantage for optimal short- and long-term health outcomes and highlighting inequitable access to care for those often living in economically disadvantaged areas: primary care, mental health, maternal health, dental care, and trauma care.

As part of the MRHA conference program, MDAC will convene a session titled *Addressing Health in Rural Communities Through Innovative Workforce Strategies*. A panel consisting of experts from Maryland's Eastern Shore and southern Charles County will address critical components needed to encourage a strong, culturally diverse, and integrated workforce. Key strategies such as recruiting and maintaining providers who speak languages other than English, elevating the critical role of community health workers, and critical role of clinicians in addressing abundance of rural health needs through medical-dental integration programs. Additional information on the program, and the registration process, [is available here](#).

## Connect with MDAC on LinkedIn!

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*“I am hopeful that the conversation surrounding oral health will shift from being underrecognized and isolated to being recognized as an essential element of health for everyone. People’s well-being, learning, employment and longevity are all dependent upon oral health.”*

Dr. Natalia Chalmers, Chief Dental Officer in the Office of the Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

Excerpt from September 11, 2024, ADA News

## NEWS & RESOURCES

### Access to Care

[Access & Academics: Improving Oral Health Through Schools](#)

### Advocacy/Policy

[OPEN Election Engagement Toolkit](#)

### RESOURCE: Requesting Maryland Medical Assistance Data

[Check out this new resource for requesting Maryland Medical Assistance Data.](#)

[Dingell Introduces Bill to Expand Access to Dental Care](#)

[Summary of the Comprehensive Dental Reform Act of 2024](#)

[What a Harris-Walz Ticket Could Mean for Oral Healthcare](#)

[Voters are Ready for Medicare Dental](#)

## Fluoride

[NTP Monograph on the State of the Science Concerning Fluoride Exposure and Neurodevelopment and Cognition: A Systematic Review](#)

[American Dental Association Reaffirms Support for Community Water Fluoridation](#)

[AAPD Policy on Use of Fluoride](#)

[The Truth Behind That Viral Study on Fluoride and IQ](#)

[ADEA Community Water Fluoridation Infographic](#)

## Medical/Dental Integration

[Integrating Oral Health Care into Primary Care: Five Successful, Long-Standing, Statewide Programs Providing Care for the Maternal and Child Health Population](#)

[Dental Visits Increase with Support from Pediatric Providers](#)

## Medicaid

[The ADA and ADSO Use Policy Reform to Expand Dental Care Access for Vulnerable Populations](#)

[Updates and FAQs: Developing and Implementing a Medicaid State Plan Amendment to Authorize Community Health Worker Reimbursement](#)

The data request process involves five steps. Please submit all required information and any questions or concerns to [mdh.medicaiddatarequests@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.medicaiddatarequests@maryland.gov)

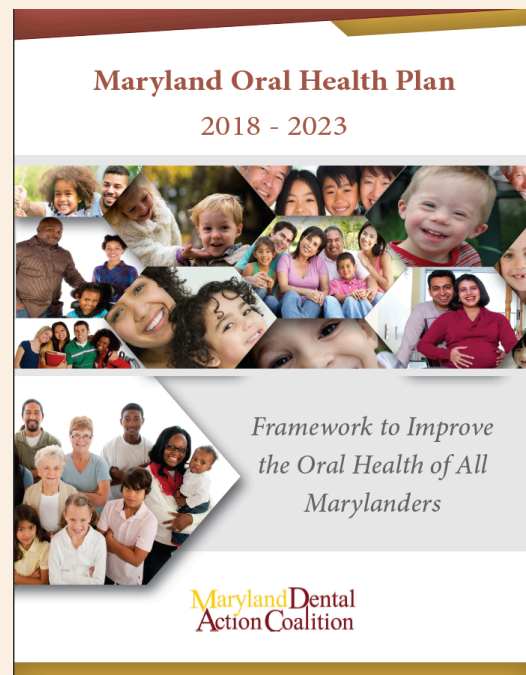
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## RESOURCE: Provider Enrollment Flyer

To learn how Maryland dental providers can enroll in the Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program and resources provided, [review this enrollment flyer](#) and share with others!

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## RESOURCE: Maryland Oral Health Plan



The Maryland Oral Health Plan outlines 11 oral health goals in three key areas: access to oral health care, oral disease and injury prevention, and oral health literacy and education.

## Mental Health-Oral Health Link

[Expanding Dental Care to Children Through Telehealth](#)

## Oral Health (General)

[Gina Thorton-Evans Becomes Director of Division of Oral Health](#)

[Investing in Oral Health: Here's Why the Time is Now](#)

## Oral Health Literacy

[Oral health literacy is our lane.](#)

## Workforce

[Helping Community Health Workers Excel in the Public Health Workforce](#)

[Trama Informed Care in Oral Health Care: The Role of Dental Hygienists](#)

[6 Notes on Dental Workforce Shortages in 2024](#)

[Dental and Dental Hygienists Compact](#)

[ADHA Chairside Recruitment Program](#)

[Community Health Centers Report Record Growth in Patients in 32.5 million](#)

[50-State Scan of Medicaid Payment for Community Health Workers](#)

## DOWNLOAD THE PLAN

The Maryland Oral Health Plan is financially supported by the Maryland Department of Health.

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## Legislative Contacts

[U.S. Senators \(MD\)](#)

[U.S. Representatives \(MD\)](#)

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

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## Meetings/ Events/ Webinars

[Webinar: Organizational Health Literacy - Health Literacy Teams and Champions](#)  
[October 7, 2024, 10am](#)

[2024 Health Literacy in Action Virtual Conference](#)  
[October 8, 2024 11AM - 3pm ET](#)

[Oral Health Progress and Equity Network \(OPEN\) Virtual Annual Meeting](#)  
[October 22–24, 2024](#)

[ADEA Fall Convenings](#)  
[Oct. 24–25, 2024](#)  
[Coronado, CA](#)

[American Public Health Association \(APHA\) Annual Meeting - October 27–30, 2024](#)  
[Minneapolis Convention Center](#)  
[Minneapolis, MN](#)

[2024 Maryland Rural Health Conference](#)  
[November 3 - 5, 2024](#)  
[Ideas to Action: Innovative Strategies for a Healthier Rural Maryland](#)  
[Crowne Plaza – Annapolis](#)





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### CONTACT

Do you have events or announcements you'd like to share? Contact MDAC, and we'll make every effort to include them in our next newsletter, as space permits.

Contact MDAC

### JOIN

MDAC is statewide coalition of clinical care providers, governments, non-profits, academic institutions, managed care organizations, foundations and associations working collaboratively to improve the health of all Marylanders through increased oral health promotion, disease prevention, education, advocacy and access to oral health care.

Join MDAC

[www.mdac.us](http://www.mdac.us)

### FOLLOW US



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