



May 2022

GOVERNOR HOGAN SIGNS LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING MEDICAID ADULT DENTAL COVERAGE

Medicaid anticipates coverage to start in January 2023



Since its formation as the Dental Action Committee in 2007, the Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) has pursued equitable access to oral health care for historically marginalized communities who experience the effects of persistent health disparities. This year, the Maryland General Assembly took a monumental step forward in dismantling these health disparities with passage of SB150/HB6 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults; anticipated to start January 2023. On Thursday, May 12, Governor Larry Hogan formally signed the legislation into law, marking a tremendous achievement that will benefit the oral health of hundreds of thousands of Maryland residents. In addition to funding for the Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults, over \$19M in supplemental funds are also included in the state budget to support an increase in Medicaid dental reimbursement rates.

Many of you participated in MDAC's multi-year campaign to secure Medicaid adult dental coverage - each year working tirelessly to augment and support coalition efforts to improve equitable access to oral health care in Maryland. Thank you!

As noted in last month's newsletter, there is much to celebrate. But at the same time, there is a lot more work to be done. For the bill to have successful implementation and equitable access to dental care, we will need similar levels of effort, participation, and collaborative work. Our collective effort has already helped thousands of dual eligible adults receive dental care, many for the first time in years, through the Medicaid adult dental waiver program. MDAC is looking into ways we can grow from that success. We will be planning future member, partner, and stakeholder meetings to discuss these growing efforts alongside other statewide initiatives to improve oral health equity and outcomes in Maryland.

TOO MANY ADULTS UNAWARE OF HEALTH CONDITIONS LINKED TO ORAL HEALTH

Though most adults acknowledge the importance of oral health as it relates to overall bodily health, far too many are unaware of which health conditions are linked to poor oral health, according to a recently published report by Delta Dental Plans Association.

According to the "2022 State of America's Oral Health and Wellness Report," knowledge of systemic health conditions that are associated with poor oral health has declined among US adults.

"Even with the knowledge that one cannot have good overall health without good oral health, we often think of the mouth and body as two distinct parts," said James Hutchison, Delta's president and CEO, in the report. In January 2022, Delta Dental conducted an online survey among a total of 2,100 adults without children as

well as parents with children ages 12 and under in order to better understand consumers' oral health behaviors. According to the report, of the participants, 92% of adults and 96% of parents reported that oral health was very or extremely important to overall health.

Despite these high results, many participants responded that they are unaware of how oral health and overall health are linked. It was of note that the rate of participant's awareness of the link between oral and overall health has declined from the previous survey. For instance, in 2022, 36% of participants did not know there was a link between oral health and diabetes compared to 30% being unaware when surveyed in 2021. Similarly, 38% of participants in 2022 were unaware of the connection between strokes and poor oral health compared to only 31% in 2021. The same is true for the link between high blood pressure and oral health, where 37% were unaware in 2022 versus 31% in the prior year, according to the results.

Fortunately, the report concluded with 9 out of 10 of participants stating that they wanted to learn more about the oral-systemic link. This provides further evidence for the ripe opportunity to educate patients and providers alike about the link between oral and overall health.

Access Report:

[The 2022 State of America's Oral Health and Wellness Report Commissioned by Delta Dental Plans Association](#)

IMPROVING ORAL HEALTH DURING AND AFTER PREGNANCY

Commentary underscores critical importance of integrating care

Improving the health and wellness of all children begins with comprehensive prenatal and oral health care during pregnancy. In the March/April 2022 issue of Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health, an article addresses the importance of expanded dental coverage for pregnant women and the significant role that midwives can play to support increased oral healthcare access during pregnancy. Read full article here:

[Improving Oral Health During Pregnancy: A Call to Action](#)

During the 2022 session of the Maryland General Assembly, MDAC members, partners and stakeholders successfully advocated for the passage of Senate Bill 230 – Dental Hygienists – Consultation Requirements – Health Care Practitioners. Dental hygienists can currently practice in the office of a physician who provides prenatal or primary care services due to a co-location arrangement authorized by the Maryland General Assembly in 2019. The 2022 bill recognizes that this co-location arrangement should not be limited to just physician offices nor should it be limited to just primary and prenatal care physicians. Given that postpartum care is equally as important, the new bill authorizes dental hygienists to co-locate in the practices of nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, and certified midwives providing both prenatal and postpartum care. Many individuals, particularly those who live in underserved or rural areas, receive their primary and maternal care from nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, and certified midwives. With the extension of postpartum dental health care to one year, effective April 1, 2022, this bill bolsters the state's public health goals to improve maternal and child health outcomes alongside advancing overall public health goals for underserved communities.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Poor oral health can exacerbate mental health issues

May is Mental Health Awareness Month- dedicated to education and awareness about the importance of improving access to mental health care, fighting stigma, and advocating for policies that support individuals, families, and communities. It is estimated that approximately 45 million Americans live with a mental illness that negatively impacts their daily lives. Poor oral health can exacerbate mental health issues and negatively impact self-esteem, employability, and social engagement. Untreated oral health issues, due to lack of access to care, can lead to pain, infection, tooth loss, causing difficulty with chewing, swallowing, poor nutrition as well as insecurities when smiling and speaking. On May 24, the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) will host a virtual session - "The Brain-Mouth Connection: Mental Health & Oral Health," examining the "brain-mouth" connection that identifies links between mental health and oral health. Interprofessional oral health education and clinical strategies will also be presented. To register for the event:

[Take 20: The Brain-Mouth Connection: Mental Health & Oral Health](#)



National Council for Mental Wellbeing Issues Toolkit to Guide Professionals and Treatment

"Challenges with oral health, mental health and substance use are exceedingly common in the United States and contribute heavily to the burden of disease in the nation." A new toolkit developed by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, Oral Health, Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment: A Framework for

Increased Coordination and Integration, provides a guide for health professionals to increase coordination and integration efforts across oral, mental health and substance use treatment settings. The toolkit offers suggestions, strategies, and on-the-ground examples for implementation of new care models across health systems."

To view and download the toolkit, click [here](#).

VETERAN DENTAL CARE CAN STIMULATE ECONOMY & IMPROVE ORAL HEALTH

A visual follow up report issued by CareQuest Institute and AIDPH

In the newest report from the American Institute of Dental Public Health (AIDPH) and CareQuest Institute for Oral Health®, researchers lay out an economic analysis revealing the whole-health cost savings of providing access to dental care for veterans. Per the analysis, veterans are not effectively accessing dental care. As a result, both veterans and taxpayers are supporting costly care through emergency department visits and inadequate chronic disease management. There is an economic impact to poor oral health, with loss of work productivity and the inability to remain employed. Providing veterans with access to affordable, high-quality dental care will improve their overall health and well-being while reducing immediate and long-term costs. Responding to the needs of the veteran community, AIDPH and CareQuest collaborated with veteran organizations and oral health stakeholders to create a forward-thinking white paper, "Veteran Oral Health: Expanding Access and Equity." Using text, data, images, and graphics, the paper identifies gaps in oral health access for veterans and explores ways to address them. Suggestions for interventions include expanding eligibility criteria for veterans to receive oral health services, thereby expanding the role of Federally Qualified Health Centers and advancing medical-dental integration in veteran health. Review the visual follow up report here:

[Veteran Dental Care Stimulates the Economy and Improves Overall Health](#)

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN CHC WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) Issues Report

The COVID-19 pandemic created immense challenges for health care infrastructure and the Community Health Center (CHC) workforce is no exception. In 2021, health centers experienced unprecedented rates of workforce loss. To learn how to better support this workforce, NACHC surveyed members on workforce attrition rates and the policies that would best support employee recruitment and retention. The frontline work of health centers during this pandemic has exacted a high toll on staff exhaustion and attrition. Health centers reported losing nurses more than other staff. In addition center operations also being hard-hit, including administrative, behavioral health, and dental staff. This report outlines the results of that survey and explores approaches that would help to diversify and strengthen the health center workforce of the future.

[Current State of the Health Center Workforce: Pandemic Challenges and Policy Solutions to Strengthen the Workforce of the Future](#)

MDH ISSUES 2021 ANNUAL ORAL HEALTH LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Cites oral health initiatives, improvements in access to care



The article below was submitted by the Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health:

The Maryland Medicaid Program and the Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health recently submitted a legislative report to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly on Maryland's oral health accomplishments in 2021.

The report focuses on key Office of Oral Health initiatives. It highlights the department's work to expand oral health infrastructure, including community water fluoridation, oral cancer initiatives, the HIV oral health care referral program, and state grant and loan repayment programs.

The report also outlines recent dental legislation and improvements to Medicaid dental access, including the availability and accessibility of dentists in Medicaid, Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program and HealthChoice utilization.

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

VILLAGE DENTAL CENTER SEEKS CLINICIAN

Full-Time Dental Hygienist Needed

The Village Dental Center is a program operated by the Wicomico County Health Department and serves the dental needs of children ages 0-20- and pregnant women of any age who participate with Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP)/Medical Assistance (Maryland Healthy Smiles). A dental home that provides year round comprehensive care to the residents of the Lower Eastern Shore region, Village Dental Center is located at 705 North Salisbury Boulevard, Salisbury, Maryland, 21804. Village Dental Center is seeking a full-time Dental Hygienist. For further information and to apply, please contact Sheila Hammond, Administrative Officer, at sheila.hammond@maryland.gov or (410) 334-3401.

“Poor oral health can create or exacerbate problems with mental health, self-esteem, cognitive health, substance use and impede social functioning in areas such as employability and school engagement.”

Oral Health, Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment: A Framework for Increased Coordination and Integration. A Toolkit Developed by National Council for Mental Wellbeing

NEWS & RESOURCES

Access to Care

[Evaluating Access to Pediatric Oral Health Care in the Southeastern States](#)

Cancer

[Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan](#)

COVID-19

[COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on US Childhood Caries and Potential Mitigation](#)

Diabetes

[Maryland Diabetes Action Plan](#)

Disease Prevention

[Healthy People Webinar Series Kick-Off: Connecting Healthy People 2020 and Healthy People 2030](#)

Health Equity

[Solutions to Oral Health Inequities](#)

Maternal and Child Health

[Improving Oral Health During Pregnancy: A Call to Action](#)

[Mothers Get Conflicting Messages on Fluoride](#)

MD ADULT DENTAL WAIVER PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS



Thousands of Maryland adults are accessing dental care through the Medicaid Adult Dental Waiver Program.

According to Maryland Medicaid, from January 1, 2022 through May 10, 2022:

- **2,948** claims were submitted
- **2,121** unique members filed valid claims
- **71** members met annual \$800 cap
- **424** unique providers submitted claims
- **\$447,464.70** paid

From January 1, 2021 through December 28, 2021:

- **9,069** claims were submitted
- **4,487** unique members filed valid claims
- **371** members met annual \$800 cap
- **593** unique providers submitted claims
- **\$1,407,559.77** paid

From January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020:

- **7,942** claims were submitted
- **4,151** unique members filed valid claims
- **313** members met annual \$800 cap
- **576** unique providers submitted claims
- **\$1,286,280.60** paid

[Improving the Oral Health of Pregnant People](#)

Medical/Dental Integration

[More on MDRAN: Answers to 11 Questions about a Successful Care Coordination System](#)

[Eight Ways to Mitigate US Rural Health Inequity](#)

Medicaid

[Impact on Health Care Utilization and Costs of a Medicaid Community Health Worker Program in Detroit, 2018–2020: A Randomized Program Evaluation](#)

[Racial And Ethnic Disparities In Dental Services Use Declined After Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Expansions](#)

Oral Health Data

[Mouths Matter More Than You May Know: Oral Health's Connection to Overall Health](#)

[National Oral Health Data Portal](#)

Oral Health Policy

[Improving Access to Dental Care Beyond Reimbursement Rates](#)

Oral and Overall Health

[Oral Health Across the Lifespan: Children](#)

[Resilient Dental Schools, Better Oral Health Care for the Underserved: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on U.S. Dental Schools](#)

[HPI: Projected Supply of Dentists in the United States, 2020 – 2040](#)

Fluoridation

[\\$424K grant will study how to get doctors to apply fluoride](#)

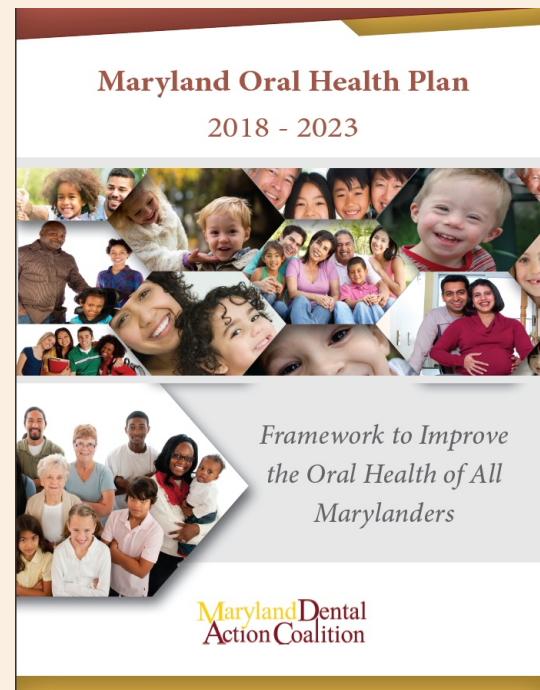
[Mothers' Sources of Child Fluoride Information and Misinformation From Social Connections](#)

Work Force

[Community Health Workers in the](#)

Since the launch of the Medicaid Adult Dental Waiver Program, Medicaid has paid **\$4,458,560.95** in dental services for thousands of Maryland adults.

2018-2023 MARYLAND ORAL HEALTH PLAN GOALS



The 2018-2023 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.

[DOWNLOAD THE PLAN](#)

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

WEBINARS

[Henry Schein Dental Academy Presents The More You Know: Treating Older Adult Patients. On-Demand recording from 1/12/2022](#)

[2022 National Day of Racial Healing for the Oral Health Community \(recorded video - 1/18/2022\)](#)

[Addressing Rural Health Needs: COVID-19, Equity and Access to Care - Recording from 2/28/22](#)

[Health Justice Now Webinar Series Part 1: Advancing Equity in 2022: Administrative Priorities and What's Next on the Legislative Landscape Recorded on 04/12/2022](#)

[United States: Time to Expand a Critical Workforce](#)

[State and Federal Loan Forgiveness Programs](#)

[The Backbone of Our Country's Healthcare](#)

[Community Health Workers Bridge the Gap for Providers and Communities](#)

EVENTS

[2022 Virtual Leadership Summit: Optimizing Maryland's Nursing Workforce Monday, May 23, 2022 Virtual](#)

[NASHP's 35th Annual Conference Seattle, WA | September 12-14 Registration opens June 7!](#)

[2022 Maryland Rural Health Conference October 24 – 25, 2022, Rocky Gap Resort, Flintstone, Maryland](#)
[Look for additional details in the spring of 2022!](#)

[2022 National Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Training Consortium Annual Conference Registration is Now Open! July 24-25, 2022](#)
[Mandarin Oriental Washington, DC](#)

[National Network for Oral Health Access Conference November 6–9, 2022 in Nashville, TN](#)
[Theme: Forward Together: Pursuing Equity, Access, and Quality](#)
[Presentation abstracts due May 25, 2022](#)
[Learn more and submit an abstract.](#)

[American Public Health Association Annual Meeting Theme: 150 Years of Creating the Healthiest Nation: Leading the Path Toward Equity November 6–9, 2022, Boston, MA](#)

[Building a Teledentistry Program That Expands Access and Increases Equity | CareQuest Institute for Oral Health](#)
[Thursday, May 19 from 3–4p.m. ET](#)

[Henry Schein Dental Academy: A Lifetime of Optimum Oral Health Begins with Pediatric Preventive Care](#)
[Webinar Registration, 5/26/2022](#)
[8:00 PM in Eastern Time \(US and Canada\)](#)

[Henry Schein Dental Academy Treating Patients Living With HIV+ Registration open for 6/27/2022](#)
[8:00 PM in Eastern Time \(US and Canada\)](#)

LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

SUPPORT MDAC



Give a little to make a big impact! Your gifts, both large and small, will be used to promote good oral health behaviors, prevent oral disease and injury, and improve access to oral health care for all Marylanders, no matter where they live or what their special circumstances might be. Please help us continue this important work.

DONATE NOW!

MDAC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and contributions to support its activities are most appreciated. Thank you.



Join us! To become a MDAC member, [click here.](#)

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

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