



December 2023

Maryland Department of Health is Building a Healthier Maryland

Collaborative initiative aimed at improving health and well-being of Marylanders

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has launched "[Building a Healthier Maryland](#)", a collaborative initiative led by the MDH aimed at improving the health and well-being of Maryland residents.

MDH is asking for assistance in distributing a [brief online survey](#) through partnering communication networks so that **Building a Healthier Maryland** hears the voices of those whose lives it intends to impact. The survey is available in English, Spanish, Chinese and Korean and is intended for any Maryland resident who is at least 18 years and older.



Building A Healthier Maryland:
Community Input

Building a Healthier Maryland aims to 1) take a broad and comprehensive look at Maryland's health status, covering everything from health behaviors to the physical environment, and to 2) identify top health priorities that will be addressed in a State Health Improvement Plan.

MDH is asking Maryland residents and partner organizations to contribute to this work and to identify strategies, assets, and resources to address the health issues that are prioritized for action. There are many ways you and your organization can participate in and support **Building a Healthier Maryland**. One of the initiative's first activities is to gather input from individual Maryland residents on what they think are the most important health issues facing them and their communities. Please distribute the survey far and wide so that all Maryland residents have an opportunity to contribute. If you have any questions about **Building a Healthier Maryland** or about the survey, please send an email to MDH.BAHM@maryland.gov.

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition is pleased to participate in the effort. Deadline to complete the survey is Wednesday, January 3, 2024.

CMS Proposes Rule to Remove Barriers for Adult Dental Care in Affordable Care Act (ACA)

Would allow states to include adult dental services as an Essential Health Benefit

The [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid](#)



[Services \(CMS\)](#) has announced that it is taking important steps to remove barriers to coverage for adult dental care. In the annual Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2025 that outlines new proposed rules for insurance sold on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Individual and Small Group markets, the CMS proposes to remove the regulatory prohibition on routine non-pediatric dental services, which would allow states to add routine adult dental services as an Essential Health Benefit (EHB).

In the November 15, 2023 fact sheet ([Click here](#)) posted on the CMS Newsroom webpage, it is noted that the “proposal would also give states the opportunity to improve adult oral health and overall health outcomes, which could help reduce health disparities and advance health equity since these health outcomes are disproportionately low among marginalized communities.”

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published the proposed rule in the Federal Register on November 24, 2023, ([Click here](#)) stating that it would allow states to include adult dental services as an EHB that Affordable Care Act (ACA) health plans must cover without annual or lifetime limits.

The rule governs issuers offering qualified health plans through federally facilitated exchanges and state-based exchanges on the federal platform, and it would allow adults who buy health insurance on the ACA exchanges to receive dental coverage as part of their medical care plan.

Plan participants would still have to pay co-payments and/or co-insurance. The rule would become effective in the 2025 health insurance coverage year. As part of its justification for the proposed rule change, HHS acknowledges the connection between oral health and systemic health, noting that, “oral health and overall health are inextricably linked; untreated oral health conditions can increase risk for and complicate the management of other chronic conditions. For example, studies have shown that periodontal disease and tooth loss are strongly associated with heart health, and oral health care can reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease, atrial fibrillation, and heart failure.”

Comments on the proposed rule are due on Jan. 8, 2024. The final rule will likely be released in the late spring or early summer of 2024, with implementation to follow in 2025. However, it is important to note that if HHS is able to include adult dental care as an EHB in the final rule, each individual state would still have to choose adult dental care as an option that they wanted to offer on their particular state’s ACA marketplace. If a respective state does not choose the adult dental care option, then that service will not be covered as an EHB on the state’s ACA exchanges.

The significant development with the proposed rule in NBPP for 2025 clearly shows that advocates are making progress statewide and nationally towards expanding equitable access to adult dental coverage and care. Community Catalyst Senior Director of Policy and Strategy, Mona Shah, recently penned [an op-ed published in The Hill](#) connecting the lack of adequate dental coverage to many other priorities, including: medical debt, affordability, service quality, and health equity.

MDAC will be submitting a formal letter on the proposed rule by January 8, 2024, the deadline for public comment.

Inside Dentistry. Medical-Dental Integration Shepherds Dentistry into Healthcare to Improve Outcomes.

November 28, 2023. Heidi Geller

Medical-dental integration is recognized as a promising, whole-health approach to preventing disease and addressing the unmet dental needs of vulnerable populations. However, what exactly does this approach entail and what work is being done to make it more of a reality? As more and more providers continue to acknowledge the benefits of medical-dental integration, have we reached a tipping point where this model will inevitably become the standard of care?

[Read the full story here.](#)



New Fluoridation Resource Launched by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Includes graphics, videos and other resources for families and health professionals



The American Academy of Pediatrics has launched a new and extensive [Fluoridation page](#) on [AAP.org](#). The page is extensively linked to the Campaign for Dental Health website and provides numerous downloadable resources for health professionals and families alike. Topics – everything from how fluoride works to an explanation of fluorosis – are addressed using frequently asked questions and printable information sheets.

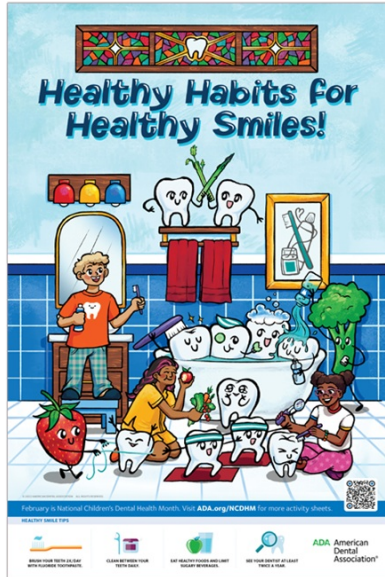


The article below was submitted by the Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health:

FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

February is National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM), and it's never too early to start planning. This month-long national health observance brings together thousands of dedicated professionals, healthcare providers, and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to children, their caregivers, teachers, and many others.

The 2024 NCDHM theme is **"Healthy Habits for**



Healthy Smiles!"

Resources, including a planning guide, posters, postcards, and activity sheets are now available free of charge via the [American Dental Association's website](https://www.ada.org).

2023 Gregory B. McClure, D.M.D., M.P.H. Oral Health Community Hero Award

The Gregory B. McClure, D.M.D., M.P.H. Oral Health Community Hero Award was created in 2018 in Dr. McClure's honor to recognize an individual with outstanding contribution, excellence, and service to improve the oral health of Maryland through increased prevention, education, advocacy and access to dental care.

Dr. McClure worked for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources in Harrisburg before pursuing a degree in dentistry from Temple University. Dr. McClure practiced dentistry in Binghamton, N.Y., until 1999, when after obtaining MBA and MPH degrees from Cornell and the University of Albany, he decided to serve the public's health needs as the Dental Director of the State of Delaware. After "retiring" from his position with Delaware in 2016, he served as the Dental Director for the Maryland Department of Health's, Office of Oral Health and as President of the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors. Dr. McClure was passionate about his work and improving the oral health of the public - especially disadvantaged and lower income families.



The 2023 Gregory B. McClure, D.M.D., M.P.H. Oral Health Community Hero Award recipient is Charles Doring, D.D.S., M.A.G.D.

Past recipients of the Gregory B. McClure, D.M.D., M.P.H. Oral Health Community Hero Award include : Dr. Harold Goodman (2018), Dr. George Acs (2019), Dr. Patricia Bell-McDuffie (2020), Dr. Gretchen Seibert (2021), Dr. Alice Horowitz and Dr. Dushanka Kleinman (2022). Award recipients are honored at the Annual Ava Roberts Oral Health Symposium.

Congratulations to all winners and thank you for all you do!

Virginia Offers Solutions to Oral Health Workforce Gaps

Report presents a roadmap to overcoming two major barriers to accessing oral health care



Virginia Health Catalyst

The Intersection of Overall
Health and Oral Health

This month, MDAC's colleague organization [Virginia Health Catalyst](#) published a "[Oral Health Workforce Gap Assessment](#)" that is based on the work of their Future of Public Oral Health Taskforce. The new Gap Assessment report offers a roadmap to overcoming two major barriers to accessing oral health care: not enough oral health professionals in many areas of the state and not enough oral health professionals who serve people who are uninsured, underinsured, or Medicaid insured. These challenges are not unique to Virginia, but the work outlined in Virginia is something we can learn from in Kansas.

The Gap Assessment shows at least five strategies to address inequities in access to oral health care providers:

- Build an accessible, affordable, and equitable career highway for current and future oral health professionals.
- Value oral health professionals at every stage of their careers.
- Incentivize oral health professionals to practice in shortage areas and to serve people who are uninsured, underinsured, or covered by Medicaid.
- Deploy the oral health workforce more equitably and efficiently, with a focus on public health and prevention.
- Collect and distribute oral health workforce data that are comprehensive, accessible, and actionable.

Many partners in Maryland are working on some of these strategies to improve access to oral health professionals, including the Pathways to Bright Futures (PBF) program. Created by the Maryland Department of Health/Office of Oral Health (MDH/OOH), the program is working with leadership, key influencers, staff in middle schools, high schools, community colleges, community youth-focused programs, and other local educational organizations located in Maryland's Dental Health Provider Shortage Areas (Dental HPSAs), to increase the number of people entering the dental professions, and the number of recent graduates practicing in Dental HPSAs.

As part of this effort, MDAC is managing the Pathways to Bright Futures Academic Award, which is based upon the applicant's desire to seek a dental career and work as a dental professional (Dental Assistant, Dental Hygienist or Dentist) in and planning to practice in one of the following three HPSA regions in Maryland: Baltimore City; Eastern Shore (including: Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties); and Western Maryland's Appalachian region (including: Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, and Washington Counties).

All PBF Academic Award applications must be typed and submitted electronically as a single PDF document to the Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) at info@mdac.us. **Applications must be submitted and received by MDAC by Friday December 29, 2023, or the application will not be considered.** Incomplete or late applications will not receive response or consideration. To request the application, click here: <https://forms.gle/t3CpkDW3eraE7BVw8>

"Healthy communities create conditions that benefit

everyone. Community water fluoridation helps all of us – the entire community – prevent unnecessary dental problems before they begin."

Campaign for Dental Health
American Academy of Pediatrics
<https://ilikemyteeth.org/>

NEWS & RESOURCES

Access to Care

[Future of Health Summit: Global Health Lunch Plenary | Part 2: Strengthening Global Health Systems: Investing in Community Health Workers](#)

[HHS Announces Top Health Centers for Clinical Quality Excellence](#)

Health Equity

[Leading State Approaches to Support Health Equity](#)

[Advancing Health Equity and Anti-Racism in MCH Policy](#)

Maternal and Child Health

[Exploring MCH Policy and the Policy Process](#)

[HHS to Improve Maternal Health Outcomes with New CMS Care Model that Expands Access to Services, Other Proven Maternal Health Approaches](#)

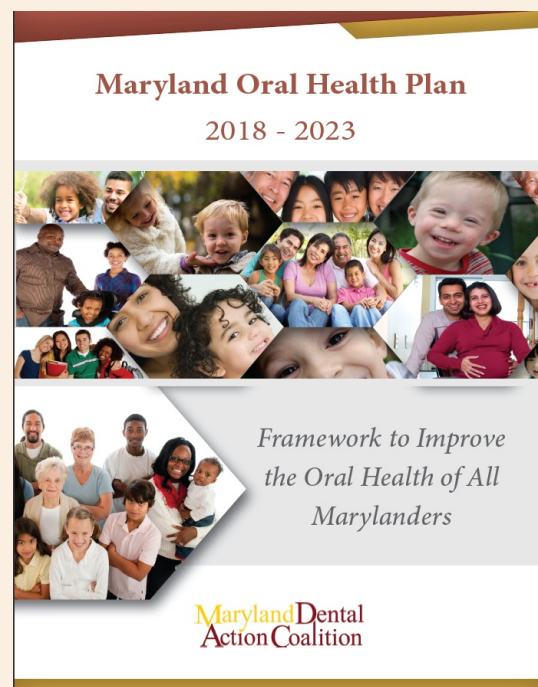
[Percentage of Children \(ages 1-17\) with Oral Health Problems](#)

[National Maternal and Child Health Oral Health Resource Center December 2003 Update](#)

Medicaid/Medicare

[Proposed 2025 Payment Rule: Marketplace Standards And Insurance Reforms](#)

RESOURCE: 2018-2023 Maryland Oral Health Plan



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.

[Meetings/ Events/ Webinars](#)

[Best Practices in Oral Healthcare](#)

[AAPHD ISSUE BRIEF: Dentist Participation in Medicaid](#)

[Maryland Medicaid Honored with 2023 Spotlight Award - Recognized for Healthy Babies Initiative](#)

[Unique Oral Health Needs among Elderly Individuals](#)

Medical/Dental Integration

[RESEARCH REPORT: Oral-Systemic Interactions and Medical-Dental Integration, A Life Course Approach](#)

[Integrating oral health into primary care is 'critical,' but 'there is a long way to go'](#)

[A Call for More Oral Health Research in Primary Care](#)

LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

[for Expecting Mothers January 19, 2024 at 10 a.m.–12:00 p.m. ET](#)

[Presented by BCM Health as part of its Oral-Systemic Connection webinar series](#)

[Families USA Health Action Conference 2024 Our Health. Our Voices. Our Future. January 23 - 24, 2024. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM ET \(Virtual\)](#)

[National Association of Community Health Center Policy & Issues Forum \(a Hybrid Event\) February 15-17, 2024 Washington, DC](#)

[National Oral Health Conference St. Louis, MO for the 2024 NOHC April 15-17, 2024 Weekend workshops April 13-14, 2024](#)

[American Academy of Pediatric Dentists May 23-26, 2024 Toronto, Canada](#)

[American Dental Hygienists Association July 26-28, 2024 New Orleans, LA](#)



SEASON'S GREETINGS!

All of us at the Maryland Dental Action Coalition wish you a joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy new year!



Join us! To become an 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

JOIN

MDAC is statewide coalition of clinical care providers, governments, non-profits, academic institutions, managed care

newsletter, as space permits.

Contact
MDAC

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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