Advancing Oral Health Equity for Marylanders
Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) Advocacy from 2017-2024

MDAC took incremental steps over the past several years to advance the integration of oral health into state health programs. Working with its diverse constituency of more than 1,400 dental and non-dental professionals and grassroots organizations, MDAC successfully advocated, supported passage, and secured passage of legislation to improve access to oral health care for thousands of low-income Marylanders. Here is a glance at the recent strides we've taken:

2017

MDAC championed passage of legislation requiring a study on costs associated with Medicaid Emergency Department (ED) visits for dental conditions; Maryland General Assembly asks that MDAC conduct the study; an examination coordinated by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health found that in Fiscal Year 2016, more than 42,000 Maryland adults visited an ED for chronic dental conditions, totaling $22.7 million. Medicaid paid for 53% of these ED visits.

2018

The Maryland General Assembly established the first dental coverage program in decades for individuals who were dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare. MDAC led the campaign, and the 2017 ED study provided the data that contributed to the bill's passage.

2019

MDAC formed the Medicaid Adult Dental Collaborative to guide implementation of the pilot program.

MDAC supported legislation that provided more flexibility for dental hygienists to work in public health settings.

2020

With the support of key legislators, **MDAC was lead proponent in securing allocation of additional funds in the state budget for Medicaid dental coverage for pregnant people for a 60-day postpartum period.**

2021

- **Medicaid expanded the period for postpartum dental** coverage to 1 year.
- **MDAC supported legislation establishing a grant program to support care for pregnant individuals regardless of immigration status,** and ensured dental care was included.
- **Legislation passed ensuring flexibility with Medicaid preventive dental care for Marylanders,** on par with private insurance.
- **Medicaid established coverage for oral healthcare provided by tele-dentistry,** providing access to more Marylanders.

2022

- **MDAC spearheaded statewide campaign to secure bipartisan passage of legislation by the Maryland General Assembly establishing comprehensive adult dental coverage in Maryland Medicaid.**
- **MDAC supported passage of the Healthy Babies Equity Act,** providing medical and other healthcare services, including dental care, to pregnant people regardless of documentation status.
- **MDAC led efforts to bolster public health improvements for maternal and child health** through legislation authorizing dental hygienists to co-locate with nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, and certified midwives in their practices.

2024

- Work requirements were updated for **limited license dentists to recognize Federally Qualified Health Centers and local health departments** that provide services to Medicaid participants.
- **MDAC supported legislation directing the Maryland Department of Health to conduct a feasibility study on expansions in Medicaid dental coverage program** and convene with stakeholders, including MDAC, to advise.
- **The Access to Care Act passed,** allowing immigrants regardless of documentation status, to purchase health and dental insurance (through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange).

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