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May 2024

Update: MDAC “My Reason to Smile” Campaign

Join MDAC’s campaign “My Reason to Smile” and use our stakeholder toolkit to spread the news about Maryland Medicaid’s expanded Maryland Healthy Smiles dental coverage!



Thanks to our collective and collaborative work statewide, approximately 210,000 Maryland adults enrolled in full Maryland Medicaid benefits have received dental care through the Maryland Medical Assistance – Dental Coverage for Adults program. Launched 15 months ago, these results are encouraging and impressive, with many adults receiving care more than once and establishing a dental home to receive ongoing, preventative care, a necessity to improved oral and overall health.

MDAC is on a mission to help even more adult Maryland Medicaid members connect to resources and services that can improve their oral health—and overall health! To do this, MDAC launched our **My Reason to Smile campaign** in March 2024. To date, the campaign ads have been viewed over 820,000 times, by approximately 280,000 people. In addition to interacting with the social media ads, over 3,500 people have visited the campaign landing page.

As valued partners, we hope you will help us build on the success of the campaign and raise awareness of the new Medicaid adult dental benefit. To assist in that effort, we have provided a toolkit with promotional resources you can use to share information with your communities.

Materials are available in English and Spanish, and include:

- Social media posts
- Newsletter/blog article
- Patient letter/email
- Rack card

(A supply of printed rack cards are available. Please contact Mary Backley at mbackley@mdac.us if you would like copies to share.)

Access our Stakeholder Toolkit

We also ask that you follow our social media channels, share our content, and stay up to date on all things MDAC as we will be posting more information on our efforts to improve oral health for all Marylanders!

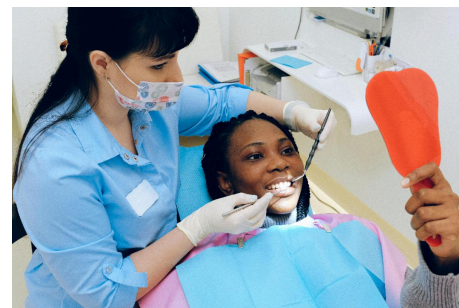
If you want to learn more about the background research that informed the campaign, review our [new infographic summarizing the findings](#).

Our background research just won the “Best in Maryland” award for Research/Evaluation from the Public Relations Society of America, Maryland Chapter!



The 2024 State of America’s Oral Health and Wellness Report
Survey results reveal trends in oral health care

Delta Dental’s 2024 State of America’s Oral Health and Wellness Report underscores a growing understanding of oral health’s significance in overall well-being. With 91% of adults valuing dental visits as crucial as annual physicals, awareness of oral health’s impact on conditions like respiratory illnesses and diabetes is rising, especially among younger generations.



Delta Dental commissioned the research of 2,000 U.S. adults and parents of children 12 and under. Below are additional key findings from the 2024 State of America’s Oral Health and Wellness Report:

- Good oral hygiene can support mental health
- More than 9 in 10 (92%) adults believe taking action to protect their oral health allows them to be more confident.
- Over 3 in 4 adults (77%) say oral health is connected to mental well-being.

A rise in preventive oral health care pays off. More than 8 in 10 adults (83%) who made a trip to the dentist in 2023 did so for preventive care, increasing from 78% in

2022. Notably, there is a corresponding decline in unexpected dental visits among adults, decreasing from 41% in 2022 to 36% in 2023.

Teledentistry emerges as a popular option, particularly among Gen Z and Millennials, indicating a shifting trend in oral healthcare utilization. The survey included 2,000 American adults and parents of children aged 12 and younger. [Click here to read more.](#)

2024 Maryland General Assembly Legislative Session

Updates limited license dentist requirement to include adults; directs feasibility study for additional services in Medicaid adult dental coverage



HB 786/SB 799: Health Occupations – Limited License to Practice Dentistry – Services for Adults.

The Maryland General Assembly passed a bill that makes changes to provisions of current law that require the State Board of Dental Examiners to waive education requirements for internationally trained dentists who apply for a limited license to work in specified settings that serve traditionally underserved populations. This bill updates the work requirements for limited license dentists to recognize that dental practices of federally qualified health centers and local health departments provide services to both children and adults with a large focus on Medicaid participants.

Currently, internationally trained dentists have a lengthy passage to obtaining a license in Maryland. In addition to completing educational requirements at an accredited dental school in the U.S. or Canada, they must take additional steps including the completion of a two-year work agreement at a federally qualified health center or local health department.

Current law specifically requires that the 2-year work requirement be for pediatric patients. When this law was initially enacted in 2003, Maryland had just established the HealthChoice Program, and as required under federal law, the program included dental coverage for children. The pediatric focus of the two-year work requirement was connected to the need to meet the needs of children who had gained dental coverage under HealthChoice.

In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly expanded Medicaid dental coverage to all adults by enacting House Bill 6 (Delegate Bonnie Cullison and then Delegate Mike McKay)/Senate Bill 150 (Senators Augustine and Guzzone). This legislation has been of tremendous importance to improving health equity for Marylanders with hundreds of thousands of Maryland adults now having dental coverage through Medicaid. As a result, state federally qualified health centers and local health departments are now serving more adults than ever. It is important to recognize that limited license dentists also may serve adults as part of their work contract. The bill simply recognizes the limited license dentists, as part of the dental programs at safety net providers, also serve adults. MDAC is on record in support of the legislation.

Maryland Department of Health Study on Adding Dentures to Medicaid Coverage

The Maryland General Assembly passed a bill requiring the Maryland Department of Health to study the feasibility of including coverage under the state's Medicaid program for removable full and partial dentures and setting adequate reimbursement rates for providers on a per-patient basis. The bill calls for the Maryland Department of Health to report its findings by Dec. 1, 2024. As part of the study, the Maryland Department of Health will seek input from state chapters of national professional dental organizations and advocacy groups that work to improve oral health outcomes for Maryland low-income residents. MDAC is on record in support of the legislation.

Access to Care Act

HB 728/SB 705 – Health Insurance – Qualified Resident Enrollment Program allows people who are undocumented to purchase health and dental insurance through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange. There are no up-front costs to the state, but there will be savings. CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, in partnership with MDAC, has been monitoring costs for emergency department visits for dental conditions that should have been treated earlier. In 2021, emergency room visits cost over \$2M for uninsured individuals.

MDAC is on record in support of the legislation. People should be able to use their earnings to purchase health and dental insurance. The state does not impose restrictions that keep undocumented people from purchasing other basic goods and services, such as food, childcare, and even homes. From a health care, economic, and equity perspective, it makes sense to allow people to use their earnings to purchase health/dental insurance.

Pathways to Bright Futures Academic Award Recipients

Students to be celebrated at Dr. Samuel D. Harris National Museum of Dentistry

The Maryland Department of Health/Office of Oral Health (MDH/OOH) Pathways to Bright Futures (PBF) program connects youth living in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) with pathways to the dental professions. Working with an expert advisory committee, including MDAC, the MDH/OOH offers presentations to youth in Dental HPSAs from dental professionals, creates experiential learning opportunities, provides academic awards annually to aspiring dental professionals, and holds seminars and externships at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry to encourage dental students to practice in Dental HPSAs.



MDAC was honored to lead a subcommittee of dental professionals charged with development of academic award criteria, eligibility, application, outreach, and selection of academic award recipients. MDAC is grateful to the following subcommittee members for their valuable expertise and participation in the process: Breann D'Atri, Coordinator of Apprenticeship & Workforce Development, Allegany County Public Schools; Sandra Garbely-Kerkovich, DDS, Vice President/Dental Director, Choptank Community Health; Diane Palmer, Executive Director, Maryland Foundation of Dentistry; and Kathryn Pawlak, DDS, Pediatric Dentistry.

This year marks the inaugural year of the Pathways to Bright Futures academic award. Based on the positive response from Maryland students to this new opportunity and their commitment and dedication to the field and their community, MDAC looks forward to this recognition becoming an annual event and opportunity to support student exploration into the profession and subsequent expansion in the state's dental workforce.

MDAC is pleased to announce the **Pathways to Bright Futures Academic Award recipients**, area of study, and academic institution:

- Cheyenne Cannady, Dentist, University of Maryland School of Dentistry
- Yehuda Diamond, Dentist, University of Maryland School of Dentistry
- Hailey McNinch, Dentist, University of Maryland School of Dentistry
- Hernajen Tundag, Dental Hygienist, Hagerstown Community College
- Jade Weatherington, Dentist, University of Maryland School of Dentistry
- Brenton Welty, Dental Hygienist, Hagerstown Community College

Award recipients will be recognized at the Pathways to Bright Futures Launch Ceremony, Wednesday, May 29, 2024, 10am-12pm, at the Dr. Samuel D. Harris National Museum of Dentistry, Baltimore, Maryland.

Congratulations to the award recipients!

Colorado and Minnesota Join Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

States eighth and ninth to pass legislation.

by Olivia Anderson
ADA News

ADA News[™]

Colorado became the eighth state and Minnesota became the ninth to join the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact, which supports license portability by allowing dental professionals to practice in participating states instead of obtaining individual licenses in each state.

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis signed Senate Bill 24-010 into law May 17, giving Colorado a seat at the table of the commission that will govern the compact. The first commission meeting is expected to take place this fall. The Minnesota Legislature passed the compact May 19 and governor Tim Walz is expected to sign the bill shortly.

ADA President-elect Brett H. Kessler, D.D.S., who is based in Denver, Colorado, said that this latest development is a “win for our profession that demonstrates what’s possible when we work with a shared focus.”

“Together — as dentists, hygienists, educators, and organized dentistry — we’ve made progress on a compact that empowers dental professionals to experience ease and freedom as they build their lives and careers,” he said. “The ADA is proud to be among the many who have taken a stand.”

According to Leah Schulz, D.D.S., president of the Colorado Dental Association, the Colorado Dental Association and Colorado Dental Hygienists’ Association worked in collaboration to support the compact legislation.

“Our respective associations work tirelessly to promote creative solutions to workforce development. By reducing barriers to licensure portability, Colorado dentists and dental hygienists will now enjoy greater mobility and less burden of maintaining multiple licenses in several states,” Dr. Schulz said, adding that both organizations will “continue to work together to ensure that Coloradans receive the greatest access to care by dentists and dental hygienists in our state.”

Colorado and Minnesota join Maine, Washington, Iowa, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin and Kansas in passing the compact. It was operationalized last month after the first seven states activated the compact.

The implementation process for the compact is estimated to take approximately 18 to 24 months, meaning that practitioners in states participating in the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact cannot begin applying for compact privileges until implementation is complete.

For more information, visit ddhcompact.org.



The following article was submitted by the Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health.

Maryland Dent-Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program For Dentists and Dental Hygienists – NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

The Maryland Dent Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MDC-LARP) is the student loan repayment program **for dentists and dental hygienists**. The purpose of MDC-LARP is to increase access to oral health care services for Maryland Medical

Assistance Program (MMAAP) recipients by increasing the number of dentists and dental hygienists treating this population.

During the 2023 Maryland legislative session, House Bill 290/Senate Bill 237 increased the loan repayment to \$50,000* per year for a three-year commitment for dentists and included the addition of dental hygienists for \$10,000* per year for a two-year commitment. *The award amount and number of recipients per award is to be determined based on available funding.

Application eligibility requirements for the Maryland Dent-Care Loan Assistance Program are:

- Be a licensed Dentist or Dental Hygienist in the State of Maryland
- Have an outstanding higher education loan debt
- Be able to serve three years (Dentist)/two years(Dental Hygienist) in a full-time eligible dental practice site (s).
- Treat a minimum of 30% MMAAP recipients as a portion of the total patient population.
- Be enrolled with MMAAP's Maryland Healthy Smiles program. (Dental Hygienists to be supervised by a Medical Assistance Provider)
- Able to keep record of all patients treated (MMAAP and non-MMAAP) and provide monthly written reports to the Office of Oral Health.

Applications are now being accepted for a January 1, 2025 start and are due no later than **July 31, 2024**. Application materials, along with additional information about the Program, can be found on the Office of Oral Health's [website](#).

Questions? Contact Stacy Costello, MDC LARP Program Manager, stacy.costello@maryland.gov

"After decades of being left on the back burner, it's encouraging to see more and more stakeholders realize the undeniable link between oral health and systemic health and the need for a system that is more integrated."

[Health Affairs: New ACA Policy Expands Access To Dental Care. Now, States Need To Act, Melissa Burroughs, Kasey Wilson, Michael Matson, May 8, 2024](#)

NEWS & RESOURCES

Access to Care

[New ACA Policy Expands Access to Dental Care](#)

[Bigger Clinic Means More People Can See a Dentist](#)

[Dental Rehabilitation in Operating Rooms](#)

RESOURCE: Maryland Oral Health Plan

[AHRQ Stats: Cost of Treatment for Dental Conditions Among Seniors](#)

Maternal and Child Health

[The Practical Playbook III: Working Together to Improve Maternal Health](#)

[Four Actions We Can Take Now to Improve Black Maternal Health](#)

[Medicaid and Combating the Maternal Health Crisis](#)

Medicare

[Caring for Older Americans Teeth and Gums is Essential but Medicare Generally Doesn't Cover That Cost](#)

[MD TCOC Model Evaluation](#)

[Reflections on the 11th Annual National Voices of Medicare Summit & Senator Jay Rockefeller Lecture, April 24, 2024 Washington, DC](#)

Medicaid/Medicare

[Emerging Approaches in Oral Health Care: Considerations for Minimally Invasive Care in Medicaid](#)

Oral Health Integration

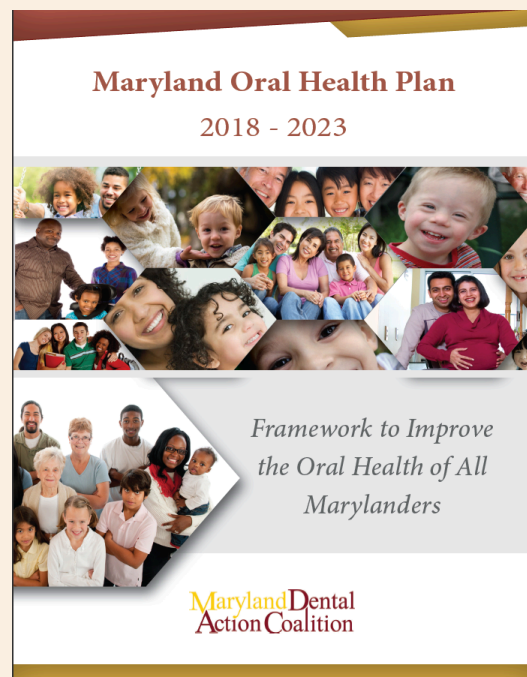
[Integrating Behavioral Health – Oral Health](#)

[Dental-Medical Integration Can Improve Oral Cancer](#)

Oral Health and Overall Health

[New initiative focuses on oral health clinicians in prevention and early detection of heart disease](#)

[Nutritional Counseling in the Dental Setting](#)



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.

DOWNLOAD THE PLAN

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

RESOURCE: Community Catalyst Dental Access Project Oral Health Data Cheat Sheet



This resource provides information on oral health data and sources that advocates commonly find

[Bullying May Affect Dental Health](#)

[Poor Oral Health, Gum Bacteria
Linked to Dementia](#)

Workforce

[Seventh State Approves
Legislation Establishing Dental
Compact](#)

[Insight into Diversity: Rooted in
Care RIDE Program Boosts Rural
Dental Health](#)

[Doctors are Taking on Dental
Issues in Low-Income Areas](#)

helpful in describing access to care barriers, oral health problems, and disparities. These data are also useful for making the case for policy solutions that address these issues. You may also wish to reach out to your state's office of oral health as they may be able to direct you to state-specific publications or data.

**CLICK FOR DATA
CHEAT SHEET**

Legislative Contacts

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

Meetings/ Events/ Webinars

[HSDM Initiative to Integrate Oral
Health and Medicine 2024
Leadership Forum. - June 4-5, 2024
Boston, Massachusetts](#)

[Academy Health Annual Research
Meeting - Baltimore Convention
Center - Baltimore, Maryland
June 29-July 2, 2024](#)

[National Academy for State Health
Policy Amplifying Sound Health
Policy September 9-11, 2024
Nashville, TN](#)

[National Network for Oral Health
Access Annual Conference
September 22-25, 2024
Baltimore, Maryland](#)

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

**Save The Date: 2024 Maryland
Rural Health Conference**

November 3 - 5, 2024
Crowne Plaza – Annapolis
Details Coming Soon



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 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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