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July 2024

National Network for Oral Health Access Convenes in Baltimore

Safety net professionals gather to address oral health advancements and issues

National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA) was founded in 1991 by a group of Dental Directors from Federally Qualified Community Health Centers who identified a need for peer-to-peer networking, collaboration, research and support in running effective oral health programs. NNOHA exists to promote access to oral health care for underserved populations by encouraging community health centers to start and maintain dental programs and to provide training, technical assistance and networking for the professionals who work in the safety net. Members include dentists, dental hygienists, other oral health professionals, community health center employees, primary care associations, medical professionals, and others interested in the NNOHA mission.

The 2024 NNOHA Annual Conference, [***Courage and Confidence in a Sea of Change***](#), will take place September 22-24 in Baltimore at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront hotel. The conference agenda takes advantage of the location in Maryland, and proximity to the nation's capital, to bring in specialists from government and academia to provide participants the latest in oral health advances, advocacy training and policy issues, with a sharp focus on promoting oral health equity and access.



Conference speakers include several distinguished professionals from Maryland and several sessions highlight innovative programs in the state to address innovative practices to address health equity. This includes *Harnessing Lived Experience to Address Oral Health Equity for Prenatal & Postpartum Individuals* (September 24, 8am-9:30am), a unique program designed to illustrate an innovative approach to expanding oral health equity for underserved prenatal/postpartum individuals through the perspective of a community health worker (CHW) and the "moms with lived experience" (moms) recruited to join a state-level Prenatal Postpartum Advisory Board. Participants will learn about the moms' transformation

from victim to health advocate and leaders in their community. Firsthand encounters and personal narratives from CHWs and “moms” will be shared emphasizing the importance of lived experience in policy work and how an equity-lens can be applied to oral healthcare. MDAC reported on this innovative program in its October 2023 newsletter and included a procedural manual designed to be used by groups who are interested in engaging diverse and varying perspectives through shared decision-making. MDAC has been an active partner in the effort since the program’s launch in 2022.

Another session, *Five Key Strategies for Integrating Oral Health Care into Prenatal Care at Choptank Community Health* (September 23, 4:45pm-5:45pm), will feature perspectives of both medical and oral health professionals and will describe five key strategies for integrating oral health care into prenatal care visits at Choptank Community Health in rural Maryland. The session will also briefly explain the framework and findings from the Integrating Oral Health Care and Primary Care Learning Collaborative: A State and Local Partnership project, coordinated by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center and funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration, in which Choptank Community Health Systems was a participant.

Conference overview, agenda, and details on registration can be located on the [NNOHA website](#).

Voters Ready for Better Dental Coverage, New Election Toolkit Available

A new poll shows support for dental care in Medicare, Medicaid, and for more veterans

[CareQuest Institute for Oral Health®](#) / Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) commissioned a recent poll of 1,000 national registered voters which found both Democrat and Republican voters overwhelmingly support including dental care coverage in Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans’ benefits.



Nine out of ten voters support adding a dental benefit to Medicare, two-thirds think all veterans should receive oral health coverage, and 75% support offering adult dental coverage in Medicaid. This poll demonstrates the growing number of voters, regardless of political ideologies, who reject the concept of a two-tiered healthcare system that excludes dental coverage from government insurance programs.

Support for adding dental to Medicare is up 14% among all voters since the last poll commissioned by CareQuest Institute on the issue in 2020. In the most recent survey, voters ranked the issue among the most important healthcare issues of 2024, on par with abortion. Sixty percent of all voters say a candidate’s support for Medicare dental coverage would likely influence their vote.

Created nearly sixty years ago, traditional Medicare does not cover most oral health procedures. Also, not all veterans who receive medical care through the VA are also eligible for dental coverage through the VA, and not all states offer comprehensive dental coverage for adults under Medicaid.

The national polling was conducted by Marketing for Change Co. from May 29 – June 4, 2024, using a representative sample of 1,000 registered voters nationwide from the YouGov online panel. The margin of error is +/- 3.1%.

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health® / Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) is urging candidates running for office this year to capitalize on the popularity of the issue and endorse the effort to add more logic to the healthcare system. The Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) has developed an advocacy toolkit to make outreach easy. You can access the toolkit here: <https://carequest.quorum.us/open/>

Our goal is simple: We want as many Congressional candidates as possible talking about dental coverage. Now is our time to act! Will you join us?

[Learn More About the Poll.](#)
[Learn More About the New Toolkit.](#)

Ohio General Assembly Passes Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

Compact adopted by nine states; active in three states

The Ohio General Assembly has passed legislation that would allow the state to join the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact. The bill passed the state Senate by unanimous vote and overwhelmingly passed the House by an 87-11 vote. The bill will now be sent to Gov. Mike DeWine (R) for review.

The compact is currently in the implementation phase. Participating states can take steps toward forming the Compact Commission, which will oversee the compact's implementation. Each participating state will have one Commissioner selected by each state's licensing authority.

Following implementation, the compact will create a pathway to licensure portability for dentists and dental hygienists who are licensed in member states. Licensees who live in states that are compact members can apply for a "compact privilege" that will allow them to practice in another member state. Under the model compact that was written by The Council for State Governments, license holders will be granted the opportunity to apply for compact privilege if they do the following:

- Hold a license as a dentist or dental hygienist;
- Graduate from a Commission on Dental Accreditation-accredited program
- Successfully complete a clinical assessment for licensure, with "clinical assessment" currently defined as an examination or process required for licensure as a dentist or dental hygienist, as applicable, that provides evidence of clinical competence in dentistry or dental hygiene;
- Pass a National Board Examination of the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations or another examination accepted, by rule, as a requirement for licensure;
- Meet any jurisprudence requirements;
- Complete a criminal background check;
- Submit an application and pay applicable fees; and
- Comply with requirements to submit specified information for administrative purposes.

For additional information on the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact and to learn which states have adopted, visit <https://ddhcompact.org/>

Health Resources and Services Administration Updated Numbers on US Health Professional Shortage Areas

Latest from HRSA shows increases since last update in February 2024

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) recently released updated numbers of Health Professional Shortage areas (HPSAs) before subsequently updating the number of additional dental health practitioners needed to fully support HPSAs.



A HPSA are areas that have a shortage of primary, dental, or mental health care providers and can be identified by geographic areas, populations, or facilities. A geographic HPSA specifically addresses a shortage of providers for an entire group of people within a defined geographic area. A population HPSA addresses a shortage of providers for a specific group of people within a defined geographic area (examples include low-income populations, homeless populations, and migrant populations). A facility HPSA is public or non-profit private medical facilities that serve a population or geographic area with a shortage of providers.

According to the new data, there are 6,842 HPSAs across all 50 states and Washington, D.C., 22 more than previously reported; an additional 9,926 dental health practitioners are needed to fully staff the HPSAs. In February 2024, HRSA reported that there were 6,820 HPSAs and that 9,781 additional dental health professionals were needed to fully staff the HPSAs.

The updated figures can be found here: <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/shortage-areas>

MDAC's *My Reason to Smile* Campaign Builds Momentum as Stakeholders Use Toolkit Resources

MDAC continues to implement our two-year, social media campaign, [*My Reason to Smile*](#), targeting adult Medicaid consumers. The objective of this campaign is to increase awareness and understanding of the oral health services covered under Medicaid, encouraging beneficiaries to utilize these benefits for improved dental health.

As of May 31, 2024, the campaign messages have been viewed 2.1 million times, and generated 14,000 clicks to various resources such as the [*My Reason to Smile*](#) landing page, and [MDAC's social media channels](#).

Additionally, there have been more than 104,000 engagements (likes, comments, shares, landing page clicks, etc.) across Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, and nearly 140,000 video views. A total of 5,349 users have visited the landing page and 154 partners have accessed [our stakeholder toolkit](#).

We hope you can help us continue to build on the success of the campaign by using our stakeholder toolkit resources to share our campaign messages with your networks.

Materials are available in English and Spanish, and include:

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



- Rack card

(Printed rack cards are also available. Please contact Arin Ahlum Hanson at ahanson@mdac.us if you would like rack cards.)

Access our Stakeholder Toolkit



The following two articles were submitted by the Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health.

Maryland Department of Health hosts Pathways to Bright Futures program launch

On Thursday May 29, the Maryland Department of Health hosted a celebratory event at the Dr. Samuel D. Harris National Museum of Dentistry in Baltimore to launch the Pathways to Bright Futures (PBF) program. The program works to tackle the shortage of dental professionals in underserved communities by promoting dental careers among young people living in those areas. PBF also works with dental students to educate them about the benefits of practicing in Maryland's Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (Dental HPSA). The goal of PBF is to build a diverse and dynamic dental workforce while improving oral health equity in Maryland.

The launch brought together students and stakeholders to address disparities in dental care access in Maryland. "I'm honored to recognize the cohort of students who will make a difference in health equity through their service," said Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services Dr. Nilesh Kalyanaraman. "We created Pathways to Bright Futures to support Marylanders as they pursue careers in dental health. We hope that their examples will inspire future generations of dental professionals."

Nilesh Kalyanaraman, Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services, discusses the Pathways to Bright Futures initiative and the importance of promoting oral health equity and reducing the dental workforce shortage in Maryland.



Award recipients gather with Pathways to Bright Futures leadership partners from the Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Dental Action Coalition and Maryland State



*Dental Association
Charitable and
Educational
Foundation.*

During the event, the Maryland Department of Health, in collaboration with the Maryland Dental Action Coalition, and Maryland State Dental Association Foundation presented scholarships to high school and college students who aspire to pursue careers in dentistry. These scholarships will assist the students in covering their education tuition and program application fees.

For additional information about Pathways to Bright Futures, visit health.maryland.gov/phpa/oralhealth/Pages/PBF.aspx.

HIV/AIDS Oral Health Referral Program

The Maryland Department of Health, Office of Oral Health is seeking physicians and dentists to participate in the HIV/AIDS Oral Health Referral Pilot Program. The program aims to increase access to dental care and create a successful, scalable oral health referral model for people living with HIV/AIDS in Maryland. Participating primary care physicians will use the Office of Oral Health's referral model to refer their patients living with HIV/AIDS to dental practices in Baltimore City. Eligible dentists must work at a Baltimore City location, accept patients aged 21 and over, and accept Maryland Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage and/or Ryan White funds. Eligible physicians must have a patient load consisting of PLWHA, work at a Baltimore City location, and provide treatment to patients aged 21 years and over. The program will provide continuing education courses for participating providers and their staff.

Enroll in the HIV/AIDS Oral Health Referral Pilot Program today!

Please [click on the link](#) for more information.

"Clear inequities in unmet dental needs and the burden of out-of-pocket dental costs have persisted across income groups from 2007 to 2021, with differences in financial burden between lower- and higher-income families growing even more substantial."

Lower-Income Families Still Spend More on Dental Care, a Report from CareQuest Institute for Oral Health

NEWS & RESOURCES

Access to Care

[Dental Access is An American 'Crisis': Here's How Vulnerable People Are Shut Out](#)

[Report Makes Economic Case For Investing in Oral Health](#)

Maternal and Child Health

[Fighting for Birth Equity in Maryland: A Conversation with Jennifer Holland](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[About Oral Health](#)

Disparities/ Oral Health Equity

[Lower-Income Families Still Spend More on Dental Care](#)

[Hispanic Population Faces Abysmal Oral Health Outcomes: What Can be Done?](#)

Medicaid/Medicare

[CMS Cross Cutting Initiative: Oral Health Fact Sheet](#)

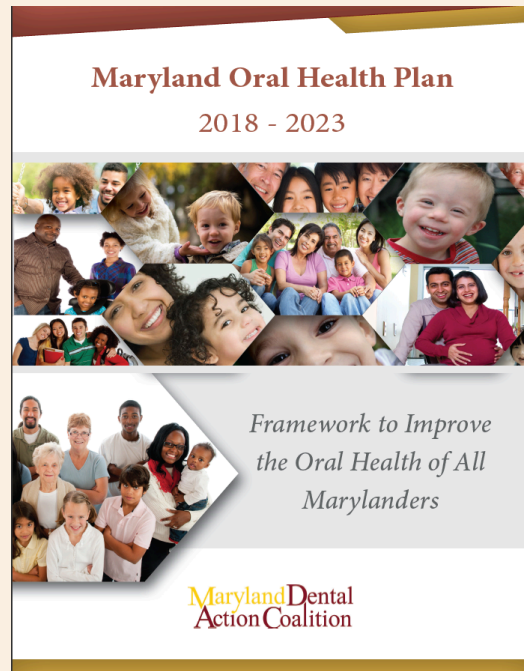
[AMA Adopts New Policies to Expand Health Care Coverage](#)

[HHS Proposes Physician Payment Rule to Drive Whole-Person Care and Improve Health and Quality for All Individuals with Medicare](#)

Medical/Dental Integration

[Advancing Oral Health Equity through Medical-Dental Integration: Dental hygienists as Catalysts for Change in an Evolving Health Care System](#)

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.

DOWNLOAD THE PLAN

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

Legislative Contacts

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

[Making Progress In Medical Dental Integration](#)

[Integration of Primary and Oral Health Care - An Unrealized Opportunity](#)

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

Mental Health-Oral Health Link

[Addressing the Mental-Oral Health Link to Veterans](#)

Older Adults

[Oral Health and Aging: Improving Access to Care for Older Adults](#)

Workforce

[PRO-HEAL Act Aims to Bridge the Dental Care Gap in Underserved Communities](#)

[Integration of Dental Therapist in Safety Net Practice Increases Access to Oral Health Care in Minnesota](#)

[Dental Therapist, Who Can Fill Cavities and Check Teeth, Get the OK in More States](#)

[Advancing Equitable Workforce Opportunities Post-Medicaid Adult Dental Benefit Expansion](#)

Meetings/ Events/ Webinars

[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](#)

[2024 Maryland Rural Health Conference](#)

[November 3 - 5, 2024](#)

[Ideas to Action: Innovative Strategies for a Healthier Rural Maryland](#)

[Crowne Plaza – Annapolis](#)



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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