



August 2023

## RECAP: MARYLAND DENTAL ACTION COALITION (MDAC) 2023 ORAL HEALTH SUMMIT

*Reported by Charlotte Hager MPH - MDAC Director, Strategic Initiatives*



On June 26, MDAC hosted its biennial oral health summit at Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City. The 2023 MDAC Oral Health Summit provided an enriching day full of information, connection, and ideation. The event had over 130 people in attendance, representing a range of organizations and professions from all over the state.

The day kicked off with opening remarks from MDAC CEO Mary Backley and President of Maryland State Dental Association Dr. Winifred Booker. We were honored to have as keynote speaker Dr. Niles Kalyanaraman, who serves as Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services at the Maryland Department of Health. The Summit featured sessions that encouraged discussion and collaboration around pivotal initiatives, including Medicaid adult dental coverage implementation and reflection on what comes next with expanding access to oral health care to all Marylanders; the Maryland Oral

Health Plan: five years in review and plans for the next iteration; improving maternal and child oral and overall health outcomes, especially among Maryland's immigrant communities; and the workforce disparities and the future of workforce diversity initiatives. Maryland Legislators closed the meeting in a plenary session – facilitated by MDAC Government Affairs Consultant Robyn Elliott – on their vision and strategy to sustain oral health programs and vision for expanding equitable access to care.

MDAC is deeply grateful to all session presenters who are a stellar group of dedicated professionals with exceptional backgrounds, experience, and expertise that they generously brought to each session. For the first time since its launch in January 2023, the Summit featured a public discussion about the new Maryland Medical Assistance – Dental Coverage for Adults program. Panelists included Dr. Parita Patel -

Dental Director at Healthcare for the Homeless, Dr. Sandra Garbely - Kerkovich- Senior VP and Chief Dental Officer at Choptank Community Health, Dr. Ali Khayyer - Dentistry Practitioner at Landmark Dental of Aberdeen, and Priscilla Lissik - Program Director at The Coordinating Center. This session provided insightful and robust discussion around experiences to date, challenges, successes, and the impact of the new program. MDAC staff Charlotte Hager and Dr. Natasha Herath facilitated a session with a group activity surrounding reflection on the Maryland Oral Health Plan (MOHP); a review of the past 5 years of data and goals for the next MOHP.

The Summit held a session dedicated to improving maternal and child oral and overall health outcomes, with guests representing various safety-net access points for Maryland residents. This session included discussion around the importance of integrating oral health care into prenatal and postpartum care to support healthy outcomes for mom and child, with presenters Dr. Rachel King - Clinical Director of Oral Health Programs at HealthEfficient, Kimberly A. Lyles, RN - Senior Director of Population Health at Health Care Access Maryland, and Sade' Watson - Program Manager of Maternal and Child Health Outcomes at Health Care Access Maryland. This session also highlighted the Healthy Babies Equity Act which expands Maryland Medicaid to cover prenatal and postpartum care, including dental, to pregnant people regardless of immigration status for up to one year postpartum. Presenters Dr. Sarah Polk - Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University and Matthew Peters - Executive Director at the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center on the Eastern Shore shared challenges faced by immigrant communities and what can be done to improve health outcomes of the immigrant maternal and child health population across Maryland.

The Summit also included a session that highlighted the importance of having a diverse workforce and ways to address these challenges. It has been found that having a provider who truly represents the community they serve can make patients feel more comfortable. There is a lack of diversity in the

dental workforce that is needed, especially in terms of black providers. Under the facilitation by Dr. Eleanor Fleming - Assistant Dean for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry and Dr. Debonny Hughes - Director of Office of Oral Health and Pathways to Bright Future at Maryland Department of Health, this session explored actions that are being taken and what further steps remain to improve the diversity in order to have the best possible patient outcomes.

During the closing plenary, MDAC formally congratulated legislators and oral health champions in the Maryland General Assembly for their commitment and steadfast resolve to addressing oral health disparities across Maryland. Their efforts led to the passage of the historic legislation establishing adult dental coverage as part of the Maryland Medical Assistance Program. We are profoundly grateful to the 2022 bill sponsors Senator Malcolm Augustine (D-Prince George's County), Senator Guy Guzzone (D-Howard County), Delegate Bonnie Cullison (D-Montgomery County), and Delegate (at the time) Mike McKay (R-Washington and Garrett Counties), currently Senator McKay (Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties). In honor and recognition of their leadership, each legislator received the MDAC Oral Health Legislative Champion Award.

Senator Augustine and Delegate Cullison then presented MDAC with citations recognizing its *"years of tireless efforts and commitment to ensure that all adults with Medicaid have equitable access to dental care. The many years that MDAC has worked to improve the lives of Marylanders is meritorious."*

## CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES SCHEDULE ADVANCES HEALTH EQUITY

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On July 13, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the calendar year 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule while also announcing proposed rule rate updates, advancements in health equity, and expanded access to critical medical services—including behavioral health care and certain oral health services.

Building on the agency's commitment to health equity, CMS is proposing coding and payment for several new services to help underserved populations, including addressing unmet health-related social needs that can potentially interfere with the diagnosis and treatment of medical problems.

CMS is also proposing that payment can be made for certain dental services prior to certain cancer treatments

*"Access to oral and dental health services that promote health and wellness allows people with Medicare to achieve the best health possible. In this proposed rule, CMS is supporting the Biden-Harris Administration's Cancer Moonshot initiative by proposing that payment can be made for certain dental services prior to and during several different cancer treatments, including, but not limited to, chemotherapy. prior to and during several different cancer treatments, including, but not limited, to chemotherapy."*

A copy of the full press release is available [here](#).

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## SENATOR CARDIN LEADS FEDERAL EFFORT TO EXPAND MEDICARE DENTAL COVERAGE

*Medicare Dental Benefit Act of 2023, would require coverage to include oral health services*

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U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Chair of the Senate Finance Health Care Subcommittee, introduced Legislation on June 13, 2023, with U.S. Representatives Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-Calif. 44) and Robin Kelly (D-Ill.-2) that would create a specific dental benefit under Medicare Part B and repeal the statutory exclusion of Medicare coverage of most dental care and dental prostheses. [The Medicare Dental Benefit Act of 2023](#), would require Medicare coverage to include dental and oral health services, such as routine diagnostic and preventive services,

basic and major dental services, and emergency care. Currently, Medicare only covers dental treatment when it is necessary for part of a procedure already covered by Medicare.

"Oral health is not a stand-alone issue. It is a vital part of a person's overall health, and the COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the challenges we face in ensuring every Marylander and all Americans have access to the dental care and treatment they deserve," said Senator Cardin. "We must decide how we want to move forward as a country. In order to achieve better outcomes, we must invest in our people and expand access to dental care, which will improve the overall health of millions."

"Studies show that oral health is critical to overall health – oral healthcare should not be a luxury.

Medicare’s lack of a dental benefit significantly contributes to poor health outcomes for older Americans and those who are disabled, especially among Black and Hispanic communities,” Congresswoman Barragán said. “Approximately 6 in 10 Hispanic Medicare beneficiaries could not afford to see a dental provider in 2021 and nearly 1 in 3 Hispanic seniors have untreated tooth decay. It’s time that Congress mandate Medicare dental coverage. This bill will make oral healthcare accessible for millions of people across the country, including many of my constituents in California’s 44th district, and allow them to get the care they need.”

“Proper dental care is not a luxury; it’s a basic necessity for maintaining overall health. This legislation is necessary to expand Medicare’s dental benefit and improve the lives of millions, especially seniors and individuals with disabilities,” said Congresswoman Robin Kelly. “Congress must recognize oral health as a foundational aspect of well-being for every American. I am proud to lead this effort to ensure comprehensive dental healthcare for millions of Americans.”

“In this nation, our health should not depend on our wealth and that includes our oral health. Oral health is key to overall health and wellness, employment opportunities, economic stability, and social connectedness. One of the most impactful steps we can take is to provide comprehensive dental coverage for those who rely on Medicare for their health coverage,” said Melissa Burroughs, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Oral Health for All Campaign, Families USA.

The Medicare Dental Benefit Act of 2023 amends Title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage of dental services under the Medicare program. The bill expands covered benefits for dental and oral health services, while also including measures to facilitate implementation and contain costs.

Specifically, the bill:

- Repeals the statutory exclusion on Medicare coverage of dental care and dental prostheses.
- Expands Part B benefits to cover dental and oral health services, including routine cleanings and exams, fillings, and crowns, major services such as root canals and extractions, emergency dental care, and other necessary services.
- Provides for payment of dental prostheses, including crowns and full and partial dentures.
- Gradually phases in benefits over an 8-year period.
- Ensures adequate reimbursement for dental providers who serve low-income enrollees.
- Requires that the United States Preventive Service Task Force (USPSTF) include at least one oral health professional.

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## PAVING WAY TO ORAL HEALTH EQUITY FOR MARYLAND PREGNANT & POSTPARTUM INDIVIDUALS

*Initiative centers on collaboration, community engagement and partnerships*

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Building on recent legislative oral health achievements in Maryland, a state-level workgroup was strategically assembled to address improvements in oral health for underserved mothers as part of the implementation of Maryland’s expanded Medicaid dental coverage window for pregnant and postpartum individuals. In a unique partnership, the initiative created a diverse collaborative working group of community members with lived experience alongside oral health partners inside and outside dentistry. This group formed the Maryland Prenatal Postpartum Advisory Board (PPAB) and has released a [procedure manual](#) detailing year one of their efforts.

The manual is designed to be used by groups who are interested in engaging diverse and varying perspectives through shared decision-making. Arranged into three distinct sections, the manual is intended to be a resource that encourages groups to use the tools, ideas, and frameworks to advance the important work. The Methodology/Process section describes the key goals and roles of various team members; the Relationships section provides tools and resources to accelerate authentic relationships with diverse participants; and the Results section highlights some of the initial

documents developed by the team.

“This is such a non-typical advisory group and we’re employing a completely different approach from the norm. I think what is crucial is that we’re engaging people with lived experience and those with learned experience and discussing the impact of race/ethnicity and equity on oral health care,” says principal investigator Lisa Bress, RDH, MS of the University of Maryland School of Dentistry. “That’s never been a part of the equation before, and it’s a powerful part of the story.”

The University of Maryland School of Dentistry is currently leading efforts in the second year of the PPAB

in which PPAB members initiate a bidirectional dialog with the community group they represent on the PPAB such as prenatal providers, oral health providers, or moms with lived experience. The PPAB has already engaged over 300 individuals in Maryland through listening sessions. This program is under the direction of principal investigator Lisa Bress, RDH, MS, and co-principal investigator Tom Oates, DMD, Ph.D. [ISI Consulting](#) provides invaluable facilitation and community engagement coaching for this initiative. This two-year initiative has been made possible through sponsorship from CareQuest Institute for Oral Health and Colgate Oral Pharmaceuticals and program partner Maryland Dental Action Coalition.

For more information on the Prenatal Postpartum Advisory Board and its current and upcoming initiatives, please contact Lisa Bress, RDH, MS at 410-706-7230 or [Lbress@umaryland.edu](mailto:Lbress@umaryland.edu).

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## ADDRESSING ORAL HEALTH NEEDS OF HISPANICS IN THE U.S.

*White Paper Explores Oral Health Status, Dental Needs, Utilization of Dental Services, and Workforce*

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The Hispanic Dental Association and the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health recently released a comprehensive white paper on oral health disparities in Hispanic communities and how they can be addressed. Latino communities, which now represent nearly 19% of the total US population, are considered some of the most vulnerable populations and are particularly affected by disparities in oral health. In this recently released white paper, the Hispanic Dental Association (HDA) and CareQuest Institute for Oral Health identifies policies to address and improve oral health and reduce inequalities among Hispanics in the US.



Key findings include:

- Family poverty level and education appear to be more sensitive than race/ethnicity in detecting inequities in dental caries (tooth decay).
- On average, less than half of Hispanic children from 12 to 19 years had one or more dental sealants, with few racial/ethnic differences.
- Approximately 15% of Hispanic adults aged 65 and over were edentulous (had no teeth).
- Across all age groups, Hispanics reported having “excellent” or “very good” status of teeth and gums in smaller numbers than non-Hispanic whites.

Recommendations include increasing community-friendly access to dental care opportunities, such as expanded mobile and school-based dental services, creating more career pathway programs for minority students going into dental careers and implementing more cultural competency training for dentists.

The full paper can be found on the CareQuest Institute’s [website](#).

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## NEWLY UPDATED! MDAC MEDICAID ADULT COVERAGE FLYER

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The MDAC Medicaid Informational Flyers have recently been translated into French and Vietnamese, in addition to English and Spanish. The one-page digital informational sheets provide quick and clear information about the expanded dental coverage now available to all Maryland Medicaid adult consumers. Please share these flyers with your clients and networks. All 4 versions of the informational one-pager as well as printer-friendly and half-sheet versions are available for public use on the MDAC website (<https://www.mdac.us/medicaid/>) and via an online folder ([click here](#)).

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## Maryland Office of Oral Health: Spanish Oral Health Resource Guide



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

The Maryland Office of Oral Health is pleased to announce the release of the Oral Health Resource Guide *in Spanish*.

## Guía de Recursos de Maryland para la Salud Oral

Edición 2023



Oficina de Salud Oral  
Departamento Contra el Cáncer y las Enfermedades Crónicas  
Administración de Prevención y Promoción de la Salud  
Departamento de Salud de Maryland

The Maryland Oral Health Resource Guide is produced by the Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health, to assist families, caregivers, and advocates in finding affordable public health dental care services in Maryland and in the immediate surrounding regions.

The dental public health programs or facilities listed in the directory provide discounted, low-cost, and/ or special needs dental services. Information about other resources including the Maryland Healthy Smiles Program and programs in nearby Delaware and Washington, D.C. also are listed.

The Spanish Oral Health Resource Guide can be found [online](#) and hard copies are available by contacting the Office of Oral Health, [mdh.oralhealth@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.oralhealth@maryland.gov)

***"Due to current restrictions, more than 65 million seniors and people with disabilities do not currently have access to affordable dental care."***

Press Release

Ben Cardin, US Senator for Maryland

June 15, 2023

Cardin Leads Bicameral Effort with Barragán and Kelly to Expand Medicare Dental Coverage

## NEWS & RESOURCES

### Access to Care

[CMS Physician Payment Rule Advances Health Equity](#)

[Medicare processing system to be overhauled for dental claims](#)

[Aetna Partners with Oral Health Kansas to support access to dental care | Drug Store News](#)

[Caries—An Ongoing Public Health Crisis](#)

[Free and Affordable Health Care for Chinese Immigrants in NYC](#)

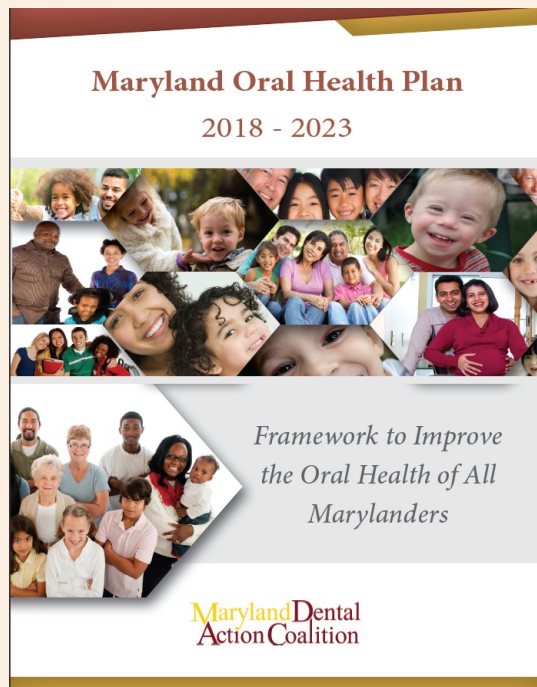
[‘Critical but often overlooked,’ Ohioans face challenges when accessing dental care](#)

[Delta Dental addresses the senior oral health crisis through systemic and legislative action](#)

### Cancer

[Oral health professionals promote ‘value of having a dentist on the cancer care team’](#)

## 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.

## COVID-19

[COVID-19 Impact on Oral Health Market Research Report 2023-2031 Market Share, Size, Trends and Growth 2023 to 2033](#)

## Diabetes

[Toothbrushing twice daily may be linked to better glucose levels in type 2 diabetes](#)

[Dental Disease, Oral Hygiene Important Determinants of Heart Failure in Patients With Type 2 Diabetes](#)

## Disease Prevention

[USPSTF: Evidence is insufficient to support oral health screening in primary care](#)

[Poor oral health correlates with risk of peritonitis in patients with kidney failure](#)

[Short sleep duration may be associated with the presence of dental caries](#)

[VIDEO: Oral health 'should be part of primary health care'](#)

[Preventable Emergency Dental Visits Cost Americans \\$2 Billion Every Year — Here's What You Can Do To Better Manage The High Costs of Dental Care](#)

[Discussing the importance of preventative dental care](#)

## Fluoridation

[Fluoride Varnish for Adults: Q & A](#)

[Protecting Children from Cavities: The Case for Allowing More Providers to Apply Fluoride Varnish](#)

[Community Water Fluoridation Levels To Promote Effectiveness and Safety in Oral Health — United States, 2016–2021](#)

[Fluoride Toothpaste, Make Room for a New Competitor](#)

## Health Equity

[Editorial: Our approach to oral health care is rotten - Times Union](#)

## DOWNLOAD THE PLAN

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

## Oral Health Data

[Confronting Oral Health Disparities Among American Indian/Alaska Native Children: The Pediatric Oral Health Therapist](#)

[How Quality Data Is Transforming Oral Health Care in North Carolina](#)

[Emergency Departments Are No Place for Dental Care](#)

[Video: Caries—An Ongoing Oral Healthcare Crisis, its Global Impact, Causation, Prevention/Arrest/Treatments](#)

[2023's Best & Worst States for Health Care](#)

## Oral Health Policy

[Cost, Race, and the Persistent Challenges in Our Oral Health System](#)

[One Change Leaders Would Make to Improve Oral Health](#)

[CDA-sponsored bill signed into law, improves dental plan disclosures for dentists, patients](#)

## Oral and Overall Health

[A Fresh Look at the Oral Overall Health Connection](#)

[New report finds growing link between mental, oral health](#)

[The Non-Invasive Caries Therapy Guide](#)

[What The Color Of Your Gums Can Tell You About Your Health](#)

[Simple Mouth Rinse Could Reveal the Earliest Warning Signs of Heart Disease](#)

[Closing America's Smile Gap: Partnering for Better Oral Health for Kids - Procter & Gamble](#)

[Partnering with Gen Z patients to improve their oral and overall health | Dental Economics](#)

[9 Natural Foods To Boost Oral Health | Times Now](#)

## Work Force

[The Risks and Repercussions of Poor Oral Health Among Immigrants](#)

[Ensuring ethical dental care: Obtaining legal consent for nonverbal adults](#)

[HPI publishes findings into racial disparities in oral health](#)

[A Study of Oral Health in Down Syndrome Patients Receives Additional Funding](#)

[Oral health literacy, knowledge and perceptions in a socially and culturally diverse population: a mixed methods study](#)

[Socio-economics and geography determine oral health disparities, not race and ethnicity](#)

[The Refugee's Road to Accessing Oral Health Care](#)

## **Maternal and Child Health**

[Procedure Manual to Launch a Diverse Prenatal/Postpartum Advisory Board \(PPAB\) \(2023\)](#)

[Oral Health of Women and Children: Progress, Challenges, and Priorities](#)

[Community-Based Doulas are Improving Maternal Mental Health Outcomes and Expanding the Health Care Safety Net](#)

[Children's Use of Emergency Departments for Non-Traumatic Dental Conditions](#)

['Frustrated and disheartened': Dental surgeons unable to keep up with children's waitlist](#)

[As dental woes drive school absences, Santa Cruz County leaders put focus on teen oral health](#)

[Pioneering Clinic in Oakland's Chinatown Brings Mental Health Care to Dental Patients](#)

[California Launches Statewide Campaign to Decrease Missed School Days Due to Dental Problems](#)

## **Medicaid/Medicare**

[CMS Strategic Framework](#)

[Tackling the Dental Care Desert | Harvard Magazine](#)

[U.S. Dentist Demographic Dashboard](#)

[CDC Dental Public Health Residency Program](#)

[Partnering with Academic Institutions to Develop Service-Learning Programs - Strategies for Community](#)

[Dental Student Helps Mentor Underrepresented Pre-Dental Students](#)

## **Teledentistry**

[Cigna Healthcare Helps Customers Screen for Dental Health Issues From Their Smartphone](#)

[Dentists have tips for overcoming dental anxiety](#)

## **EVENTS**

[American Dental Therapy Conference October 2-9, 2023 Renaissance Waterford 6300 Waterford Boulevard, Oklahoma City, OK.](#)

[Federal Service Immersion Program October 9 to 13, 2023, Washington, D.C](#)

[National Network for Oral Health Access Conference November 5–8, 2023 Denver, CO](#)

[National Oral Health Conference Call for Abstracts.](#)

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

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## **WEBINARS**

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[Strategies for the Integration of Behavioral Health and Oral Health August 24, 2023, at 3:30 p.m. ET Presented by the National Network for Oral Health Access \(NNOHA\)](#)

[Increasing the Proportion of Children and Adolescents Who Have Dental Sealants on One or More Molars August 30, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. ET Presented by NNOHA in partnership with ASTDD, the Federal Healthy People 2030 Oral Health Workgroup, and the Indian Health](#)

## [CMS Strategic Plan](#)

[Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker](#)

[DHHS plans to speed up Medicaid expansion. What would that mean for North Carolina?](#)

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## **Medical/Dental Integration**

[Dental Home Playbook: A Physician Guide with Tips and Tools to Integrate Oral Health into Your Primary Care Practice](#)

[Dental Caries: Early Intervention and the Role of the Pediatrician.](#)

[AAPD Offers Guidance to Physicians Considering the Use of SDF](#)

[Embedding Dental Hygienists into Medical Care Teams: Implementation and Evaluation of a Medical-Dental Integration Approach in Colorado.](#)

[The Impact of Preventive Dental Services on Subsequent Dental Treatment for Children in Medicaid.](#)

[Improving Access to Oral Health Care: Integrating Dental Hygienists into Federally Qualified Health Center Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinics in Michigan.](#)

[Integration of Oral Health Screening, Intervention, and Referral Into the Pediatric Well-Child Visit.](#)

[Medical Dental Integration in Wisconsin: Integrating Dental Hygienists into Pediatric Well Child Visits and Prenatal Care](#)

## [Service](#)

[Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology Seminar Series: Caring for Older Adults: Improving Patient Care.](#)

[Oral Health Learning Café](#)

[American Indian and Alaska Native Oral Health: Challenges and Opportunities](#)

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## **LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS**

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

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## **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 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](http://www.mdac.us)

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Maryland Dental Action Coalition | 10015 Old Columbia Road, Suite B-215, Columbia, MD 21046

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