



NOVEMBER 2022

CMS Expanding Access to Dental Care for Services Deemed Integral to Medical Conditions



The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is expanding access to dental care by finalizing payment for services deemed "integral to covered medical services," according to the Calendar Year 2023 Physician Fee Schedule final rule that was released on November 1.

The new rule clarifies and finalizes policies in which Medicare Parts A and B will pay for dental services when they are essential to the specific treatment of a beneficiary's primary medical condition. Also, Medicare will pay for services, such as dental exams and treatments prior to or simultaneously with organ transplants, cardiac valve replacements, and valvuloplasty procedures. Coverage begins in 2023, according to a [CMS press release](#). Beginning in 2024, Medicare will also pay for dental exams and services prior to a beneficiary's treatment for head and neck cancer. Additionally, CMS is establishing an annual process to review public comments on other circumstances in which Medicare should pay for dental services. CMS seeks to address feedback and questions about operational aspects of billing and claims processing for these dental services, according to the above press release. "Providing whole person support and services through Medicare will improve health and wellbeing for millions of Americans and even save lives," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said in the release.

In a public statement released on November 1, the Consortium for Medically Necessary Oral Health Coverage - a leading consensus-building alliance of more than 240 dental, medical, patient, and consumer organizations, including MDAC – commended the Administration for finalizing a [regulatory policy](#) that will have a direct and meaningful impact in the lives of many Medicare beneficiaries. With this action, the Medicare program is taking an important step towards providing much-needed coverage of medically necessary oral and dental care.

Numerous studies show that periodontal disease is linked to several chronic health conditions, including diabetes and heart disease, and improving periodontal health can improve outcomes for those with diabetes and heart disease. At the stage of life when these chronic conditions become more common — that is, for older adults — access to oral health care often drastically decreases in the United States. According to a report from the [CareQuest Institute for Oral Health](#), including periodontal treatment in Medicare has the potential to save up to \$14.5 billion annually for patients with diabetes and up to \$27.8 billion annually for patients with heart disease.

ASTDD Releases Report on Best Practice Approaches to School-Based Dental Sealant Programs Best



The Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) Best Practices Committee announced the posting of the updated ASTDD **Best Practice Approach Report, [School-Based Dental Sealant Programs](#)**, and its associated Descriptive Reports. They gave [special acknowledgment](#) to Prasida Khanal, BDS, MPH, and Beth Lowe, BSDH, MPH, who served as the primary authors for the report in addition to the National Maternal and Child Health Oral Health Resource Center for funding the report through support from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the numerous members of the workgroup and the external reviewers for their thoughtful contributions, and the programs that submitted the Descriptive Reports that

accompany the BPAR.

UMD to Lead NIH-funded Initiative Aimed at Supporting Marginalized Communities



Community members in Maryland and three other states will be able to access dental care at local libraries, thanks to a University of Maryland-led project. It will also feature English and professional writing students using their skills to inform the public about issues of health access and disparities.

A new multi-institution project based at the University of Maryland is focused on understanding and responding to inequities in dental care by reaching patients at places in the US that are free and open to everyone: i.e... public libraries.

The Narratives and Medical Education (NAME) project will place predoctoral dental students and dental hygiene students at six libraries in California, Indiana, Iowa, and Maryland—including the Hyattsville Public Library in Prince George’s County—to provide screenings and education. In addition, college students studying English and professional writing will engage with patients to highlight the experiences of marginalized communities and build out qualitative narratives that inform the public around issues of health access and disparities.

Research links poor oral health to a range of negative physical, mental, and economic impacts. Yet, about one-fourth of the U.S. population, (plus an unknown number of children) do not have dental coverage, according to research from CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. While older Americans are most at risk of developing oral health problems, they’re most likely to also lack dental insurance. Communities of color are also disproportionately impacted, research shows.

The NAME project was awarded a grant from the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. It’s in collaboration with researchers from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, San Francisco State University, Indiana University, and the University of Iowa. Launched in the fall of 2022, the NAME Project will run for two years. The project’s first “health fairs” will be held across the country over the next six months.

Horowitz Center for Health Literacy Releases Oral Health and Health Symposium Report



On September 16, 2022, the Horowitz Center for Health Literacy hosted an oral health and health literacy symposium titled *Accelerating Oral and General Health for All through Health Literacy*. This event highlighted the career and contributions of Dr. Alice M. Horowitz in the emergence and growth of oral health as a focal area within the health literacy field. Speakers addressed oral health and health literacy research, practice, and policy that have developed during the prior 20 years, and highlighted contributions to and needs for Maryland around the importance of oral health and general

health integration as a health literacy and public health issue. The symposium concluded with a look at future issues and opportunities to advance oral health through health literacy and the role of the Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy. A summary of the proceedings is now posted on the Horowitz Center for Health Literacy [website](#).

While the symposium proceedings capture the great success of oral health literacy and education efforts in Maryland, the need remains to provide more residents with accurate and easy-to-understand information in order to prevent oral disease and increase access to affordable oral health care. Maryland’s provider community – both oral health and medical professionals – can use proven techniques to provide health information and teach good oral health practices clearly and accurately. They can also use these skills to engage other health professionals, policymakers, and key stakeholders about the importance of oral health to one’s overall health. MDAC looks forward to continuing its work with members, partners, and stakeholders on activities that build on statewide efforts to support oral health literacy and health education goals identified in the Maryland Oral Health Plan, 2018-2023:

- Increase understanding of the relationship between oral health and overall health, and promote good oral health practices and access to oral health care;
- Improve collaboration between oral health and other health and human services providers so that patients understand how to navigate the oral health care system and establish a dental home; and
- Educate medical professionals and students about the importance of the oral/systemic connection and foster collaboration between medical and dental disciplines and communities.

Related: Horowitz Center for Health Literacy Becomes State’s Consumer Health Information Hub

By designation of the Maryland General Assembly, as of July 1, 2022, the Horowitz Center for Health Literacy is Maryland’s Consumer Health Information Hub. In consultation with state and local agencies, the hub will ensure that the public receives clear and useful health information through various forms of communication, including websites, social

media, print materials, and community meetings. The hub will also provide students with the opportunity to learn and practice clear health communication methods and prepare the information for staff state and local health departments, community organizations, clinics, and health education programs.

Doula and Perinatal Community Health Workers in Medicaid Learning Series



The Institute for Medicaid Innovation and Every Mother Counts are launching a comprehensive and actionable virtual learning series to increase awareness of community-based doulas and perinatal community health workers and their services, the evidence supporting their benefits and cost-effectiveness, and their potential to improve health equity in Medicaid. The series is geared towards state Medicaid agencies, Medicaid health plans, provider groups, professional associations, and other Medicaid stakeholders. Get more information about the series [here](#).

MARYLAND'S MOUTHS MATTER - Fluoride Varnish and Oral Health Screening Program for Kids



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



Program ensures children have access to preventive dental services

The Maryland Department of Health's Office of Oral Health (OOH) works to ensure children across the state have access to preventive services, such as fluoride varnish. The Maryland Medicaid Program reimburses Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) medical providers who apply fluoride varnish to children, ages nine months through age five. The Maryland's Mouths Matter Program trains providers on the dental caries process, caries risk assessment, anticipatory guidance, the fluoride varnish application and the importance of parent education and referrals to a dental home.

Primary care providers can play an integral role in providing parent education and in establishing a dental home for their patients before their first birthday. For more information, including how to participate in the Maryland's Mouths Matter program, visit the [OOH website](#).

November 29, 2022, is Giving Tuesday



Since 2010, MDAC and its coalition partners have worked to improve the oral health of all Marylanders. In a few short years, Maryland became a national model in oral health care by making comprehensive dental services available to low-income children. And in 2022, we were able to do the same for adults.

On this Giving Tuesday, we invite you to give generously to support MDAC's work to continue to improve the oral health of all Marylanders, no matter where they live or what their special circumstances might be. While the future is bright, the need continues to be great, and we need your help. Your donation will help MDAC:

- **Advocate for policies** to help under-served Marylanders obtain equitable access to needed care.
- **Advocate for national policy initiatives to improve access to dental care**, particularly for older adults.
- **Achieve the goals** set out in the 2018-2023 Maryland Oral Health Plan.
- **Work to ensure the success of the launch and implementation of the Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults** and demonstrate that a Medicaid adult dental benefit for all adults is a good investment in both health outcomes and the fiscal health of Medicaid.
- **Continue to expand the scope of practice** for clinical care providers to address workforce shortages, particularly in rural areas of the state.
- **Improve oral health literacy and education**, particularly in Latino and immigrant communities in Maryland.
- **Integrate oral and overall health**, so all Marylanders can live happy, healthy, and productive lives.
- **Provide opportunities** to network, communicate, and collaborate with other oral health stakeholders in Maryland through statewide convenings.
- **Give updates and insights** on proposed state and federal policies; share success stories, best practices, and lessons learned; and disseminate the latest oral health news through the MDAC newsletter, website, and social

Please give generously. [Donate here](#), or send your check to Maryland Dental Action Coalition, 10015 Old Columbia Road, Columbia, MD 21046. MDAC is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Your tax-deductible contributions to support MDAC's activities are greatly appreciated.

Thank you, and best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season.

With gratitude,

Mary Backley
Chief Executive Officer
Maryland Dental Action Coalition

"The intent of Maryland's oral health literacy strategy is twofold: a) reduce oral health disparities by maximizing the capability and role of the many stakeholders who contribute to the health of a population, and b) reduce barriers – real or perceived – patients encounter when interacting with the dental care systems."

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Oral health literacy: a pathway to reducing oral health disparities in Maryland

Alice M. Horowitz PhD; Dushanka V. Kleinman DDs, MScD

*Journal of Public Health Dentistry*

First published: 3/20/12

## NEWS & RESOURCES

### Access to Care

[Dental Researcher Tackles Oral Health Disparities Among Older Adults](#)

### Cancer

[Discussing HPV and Detecting Oral Cancer The Role of Oral Health Providers](#)

[Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan](#)

[Dentists have a place on cancer teams](#)

### COVID-19

[Dental Service and Resource Needs during COVID-19 among Underserved Populations](#)

[COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on US Childhood Caries and Potential Mitigation](#)

### Diabetes

[Maryland Diabetes Action Plan](#)

## MD ADULT DENTAL WAIVER PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS



Thousands of Maryland adults are accessing dental care through the Medicaid Adult Dental Waiver Program.

According to Maryland Medicaid, from January 1, 2022 through November 15, 2022:

- **7,509** claims were submitted
- **4,098** unique members filed valid claims
- **283** members met the annual \$800 cap
- **536** unique providers submitted claims
- **\$1,176,781.43** paid

From January 1, 2021 through December 28, 2021

- **9,123** claims were submitted
- **4,511** unique members filed valid claims
- **371** members met annual \$800 cap



[The American Diabetes Association Launches Collaborative Oral Health Campaign with Pacific Dental Services](#)

**Disease Prevention**

[Making the Case for Dental Coverage for Adults in All State Medicaid Programs](#)

**Health Equity**

[Addressing the Root DISMANTLING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO ORAL HEALTH EQUITY](#)

[Initiative ‘Borrowing’ Libraries Will Expand Access to Dental Care](#)

[The Connection Between 100 Million Mouths and Oral Health Equity](#)

[The Glaring Scope of Racial Disparities in Oral Health](#)

[Why We Created the Oral Health Equity in America Survey — and What We Found](#)

[Oral Health Care Access, Inequity, and Inequality](#)

**Maternal and Child Health**

[HHS Announces Over \\$20 Million in Awards to Implement Biden-Harris Administration Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis; Reduce Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health](#)

[Acculturation and dental sealant use among US children](#)

[Interventions with pregnant women, new mothers and other primary caregivers for preventing early childhood caries](#)

[Tracker of the Week: State Efforts to Extend Postpartum Coverage](#)

[NIH Supports Research on the Oral Health of Women and a Diverse Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research Workforce](#)

[States Advancing Equitable Maternal Health Policy Highlighted at #NASHPCONF22](#)

**Medical/Dental Integration**

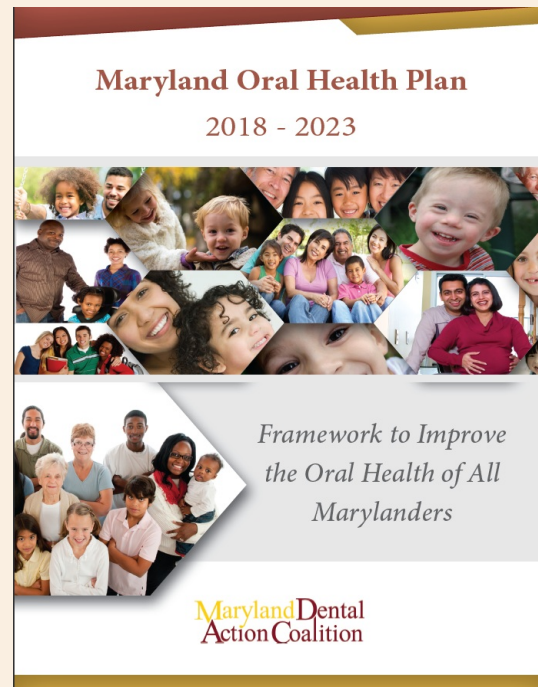
- 595 unique providers submitted claims
- \$1,414, 602.35 paid

From January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020

- 7,942 claims were submitted
- 4,151 unique members filed valid claims
- 313 members met annual \$800 cap
- 576 unique providers submitted claims
- \$1,286,280.60 paid

Since the launch of the Medicaid Adult Dental Waiver Program, Medicaid has paid **\$5,238,135** in dental services for thousands of Maryland adults.

**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.

**DOWNLOAD THE PLAN**

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

**Work Force**

[Supporting Our Oral Health Workforce](#)

[Shaping the Nation’s Smiles with Dental Public Health](#)

[Strengthening Oral Health in the U.S. through Integration and Workforce Development: Lessons from State and Federal Health Officials](#)

[The CPT Code for the Application of Silver Diamine Fluoride, Explained](#)

[ASTDD Older Adult Oral Health Resources for Collaboration](#)

[Dental Therapy as a Workforce Solution to Improve Health Justice](#)

[Medical-dental integration needs to start in school](#)

[Early Childhood Referrals by HealthySteps and Community Health Workers](#)

## Medicaid/Medicare

[A MEDICAID GAP ANALYSIS OF ORAL HEALTHCARE FOR ADULTS IN CONNECTICUT](#)

[Another Billion Reasons for a Medicare Dental Benefit](#)

[Oral Health is Health – Medicare Coverage Should Reflect That](#)

[Advancing Oral Health Equity for Medicaid Populations](#)

[MEDICARE ORAL HEALTH COALITION APPLAUDS “MEDICALLY NECESSARY” DENTAL COVERAGE IN FINAL 2023 MPFS](#)

[CMS Annual EPSDT Reporting in all 50 States plus DC](#)

## Oral Health Data

[Americans Are Still Not Getting the Dental Care They Need](#)

[Adult Use of Emergency Departments for Non-Traumatic Dental Conditions: Spotlight on Florida](#)

[The Oral Health in America Report: A Public Health Research Perspective](#)

## Oral Health Policy

[The Role of Law and Policy in Increasing the Use of the Oral Health Care System and Services](#)

[Sociodemographic Changes and Oral Health Inequities: Dental Workforce Considerations](#)

[Important Facts About Medicare & Dental /Oral Health Coverage](#)

## Teledentistry

[Refining the process: Safety net dental professionals' experiences with teledentistry implementation during the first year of COVID-19](#)

[Assessing Risks of Early Childhood Caries in Primary Care Practice Using Electronic Health Records and Neighborhood Data](#)

[Apps for Promoting Children's Oral Health: Systematic Search in App Stores and Quality Evaluation](#)

## EVENTS

[13th Annual Ava Roberts Advanced Pediatric Dentistry Seminar  
Friday, December 2, 2022,  
Ten Oaks Meeting Venue  
Clarksville, Maryland](#)

[Families USA's Health Action Conference  
Tue, 24 Jan, 2023 - Sat, 28 Jan, 2023](#)

[2023 National Oral Health Conference  
April 17-19, 2023  
Orlando, FL](#)

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## WEBINARS

[Strengthening and Supporting the Oral Health Workforce webinar](#)

[Unlocking Access to Oral Health  
An event hosted by The Hill and sponsored by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health](#)

[Health Justice Now Webinar Series Part 1: Advancing Equity in 2022: Administrative Priorities and What's Next on the Legislative Landscape  
Recorded on 04/12/2022](#)

[How and Why to Set Up a Successful Medical-Dental Integration Program](#)

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## LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

## SUPPORT MDAC

## [Oral Health Policy Equity Tool](#)

### Oral and Overall Health

[‘Your mouth becomes a minefield’: the Americans who can’t afford the dentist](#)

[OLDER AMERICANS’ ORAL CARE REGRETS, BARRIERS & IMPACT](#)

### Fluoridation

[Fluoride toothpastes of different concentrations for preventing dental caries](#)

[Are the Dental Guidelines for Early Dental Visits and Fluoridation Measures Supported by Pediatricians, and What Are Their Caries Prevention Efforts?](#)



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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