



July 2020

MDAC MEMBERS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS Improvements in access to oral health care; meeting COVID-19 challenges

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Maryland's response to the pandemic and the excellent collaboration between MDAC members, partners, and stakeholders has resulted in significant progress in addressing oral health issues and improving access to oral health care. MDAC highlighted these positive developments in a July 14 member's meeting held virtually.

MDAC Chief Executive Officer Mary Backley provided an update on MDAC activities, including the development of a [Guide on the Use of Teledentistry](#) during COVID-19 in response to Governor Hogan's authorization of the use of teledentistry. MDAC also developed a guide on [What to Expect at the Dentist during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#). Both guides, as well as extensive resources on COVID-19 for both patients and providers, can be found on the [MDAC website](#).

In support of the Maryland Department of Health's request to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, MDAC and its colleague organizations throughout Maryland [sent a letter to CMS](#) asking for the inclusion of Maryland Medicaid dental providers in the CARES Act funds. Last month, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the release of funds to support dentists and other Medicaid providers during the COVID-19 emergency. (see *HHS Extends COVID Relief Funding Deadline* article below for additional information).

MDAC also joined nearly 200 national, state, and local organizations in urging Congressional leaders to support the important role of oral health in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the letter asked that the next COVID-19 relief package include policies that stabilize state budgets to protect access to essential oral health care by increasing the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) and provide support to state health departments and oral health programs by establishing an oral health infrastructure fund to respond to crisis-related oral health needs.

State Dental Director Debono Hughes, DDS provided updates from the Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health (OOH). Although COVID-19 has put the department's HIV Oral Health Care Referral Project on hold, work on other programs is moving forward. OOH hosted a call with county dental directors regarding school sealant programs (which are on hold due to COVID-19), and training for the childhood obesity screening program is being conducted virtually. Information on the reopening of dental offices is available on the [OOH website](#).



Maryland State Delegate Mike McKay (R-Allegany and Washington Counties) and MDAC Government Affairs Consultant Robyn Elliott shared the outcomes of the 2020 legislative session, highlighting the progress made in improving access to dental care. The leadership and commitment of Delegate McKay and Senator Guy Guzzone (D-Howard County) to oral health resulted in the extension of Medicaid dental coverage for 60 days postpartum, another step closer to dental benefits for all Medicaid adults. Due to the economic downturn, many new funding initiatives were paused, but Governor Hogan preserved the funding for postpartum coverage. The start date was delayed six months, from June 1, 2020 to January 1, 2021.

Although state budget deficits will affect the pace of advocacy, Delegate McKay encouraged MDAC members to use this time to protect the progress made on dental coverage, build and strengthen relationships with legislators, and lay the groundwork for future initiatives by promoting oral health as part of an integrated health solution.

The results of the Medicaid adult dental waiver program, launched a little over a year ago, are encouraging. Guli Fager, Director of the MDAC Adult Dental Collaborative, highlighted its work, including a direct mail postcard campaign to increase awareness of the new dental benefit and technical assistance for

providers enrolling in Medicaid. The collaborative also conducted an audit of the Maryland Healthy Smiles provider directory and surveyed dental providers and social service professionals to assess the program and identify areas for improvement. Medicaid's Katie Neral, Deputy Director, Acute Care Administration and Claire Seibert, Chief, Division of Dental, Labs and Clinics, provided updates on program statistics and utilization of services.



On March 24, the Maryland Department of Health directed providers to postpone all elective dental procedures. On May 7, providers were able to resume elective procedures. Most dental offices in Maryland have reopened and are providing routine dental care. Charles Doring, DDS and Dorian Birkholz, MSDA Peer Review and Patient Relations Coordinator, discussed the challenges providers face during the COVID-19 pandemic, how they are changing their dental practices to meet those challenges, and what patients can expect at their next dental visit.

Head Start centers, which serve more than 10,666 Maryland children ages 3-5 years of age from at-risk backgrounds, have been closed since March and services are being provided virtually. Due to concerns about the possible spread of COVID-19, toothbrushing during the day will no longer be conducted when Head Start Centers reopen. Many families have postponed well child visits and scheduled dental visits during the pandemic. Tresa Hanna, Head Start Collaboration Director, Division of Early Childhood at the Maryland State Department of Education and Joy Auslander, RN, BSN, Pediatric Nurse at the Y in Central Maryland discussed the oral health implications for children's oral health and how MDAC members, partners, and stakeholders can help.



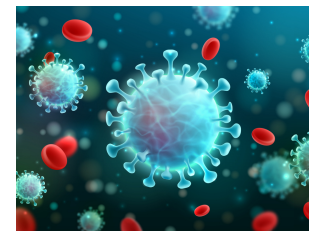
During the meeting, Mary Backley recognized two members of the MDAC board of directors for their invaluable assistance and contributions to MDAC. Cheryl Bruce served as treasurer, and her term was over at the end of last year. Donna Behrens' term as board chair also ended in 2019, but she remains on the board as the Immediate Past Chair. MDAC is very appreciative of and fortunate to have two board members who have served the organization extremely well.

Presentations from the meeting can be found [here](#).

HHS EXTENDS COVID RELIEF FUNDING DEADLINE TO AUGUST 3 **\$15B in funding to be distributed to Medicaid, CHIP providers - including dentists**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has extended the application deadline for CARES Act provider relief funds to August 3, 2020.

Approximately \$15 billion from the [Provider Relief Fund](#) will be distributed to eligible providers (including dentists) that participate in state Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance (CHIP) and have not received a payment from the Provider Relief Fund General Distribution. Providers must meet federal qualifications.



Dentists must submit their applications through the [Enhanced Provider Relief Fund Payment Portal](#) by no later than August 3. See [hhs.gov/providerrelief](#) and the [Dental Distribution FAQs](#) for further information.

FORMER USPHS CHIEF DENTAL OFFICERS SPEAK OUT **Issue statement of support to mark 75th anniversary of community water fluoridation**



On July 7, 2020, eight former U.S. Public Health Service Chief Dental Officers issued a statement of support to commemorate the 75th anniversary of community water fluoridation.

Named one of the [10 great public health achievements](#) of the 20th century by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, community water fluoridation has contributed to a large decline in cavities in the United States since the 1960s.

Fluoride, a common element found in soil and in fresh and ocean waters, is nature's way of keeping teeth strong. Fluoride makes teeth more resistant to decay, and is safe to use. When the amount of fluoride in a community water supply is too low to protect teeth, fluoride is added.

Community water fluoridation is an efficient, cost-effective way to ensure that everyone in a community, regardless of their age, income, or education, has access to the cavity-prevention benefits of fluoride. Marylanders are fortunate, because most tap water in Maryland contains fluoride.

[Read the statement of support](#) for community water fluoridation.

MDAC ISSUES PATIENT GUIDE TO DENTAL VISITS DURING COVID-19

Prepares patients for changes they may see at their next dental visit

Most dental practices in Maryland are now open and seeing patients for routine dental care. But for patients, a trip to the dentist's office during the COVID-19 pandemic may be different from their previous dental visits.

MDAC's [What to Expect at the Dentist during the Covid-19 Outbreak](#) outlines the changes many dental practices have implemented so patients know what to expect and can feel comfortable going to the dentist.

The guide includes information on front office protocols, physical changes to the dental office, and how dentists are working to keep patients safe.

USPHS NOW ACCEPTS APPLICATIONS FROM DENTAL STUDENTS

4th year dental students can apply to Commissioned Corps

As of May 2020, 4th year dental students can now apply to the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps. Previously, a candidate had to have graduated from an accredited U.S. dental school prior to beginning their application. This new change will allow 4th year dental students (and even dental students late in their 3rd year) to go ahead and begin the process of applying to the USPHS.

USPHS dentists serve primarily in seven agencies, including the Indian Health Service, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Health Service Corps, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the National Institutes of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Visit www.usphs.gov to learn more about joining the USPHS.

THE TIME IS NOW FOR ORAL HEALTH

COVID-19 highlights health disparities, need for action to improve access to care

The COVID-19 pandemic is shining a harsh light on existing disparities, and flat-out gaps, in health and health care in the United States — and oral health is no exception. It is also putting access to oral health care at risk. At the same time, policymakers and candidates for office are building their policy agendas for 2021.

As our leaders discuss how best to recover and drive our country toward improved health, a stronger economy, and racial equity, we cannot allow them to continue to overlook and undervalue oral health.

Families USA's insights column, [Now is the Time for Oral Health Coverage: A Call to Action for All Health Advocates](#), outlines the actions needed to achieve a healthier, stronger, and more equitable nation that prioritizes comprehensive health coverage that includes oral health.

Now is the time to act and join in this critical fight. If you have a personal story about the importance of oral health care, or how a lack of access to oral health care affects you, you can [share your story here](#). To find out how you can get more involved, contact Melissa Burroughs, Families USA's Senior Oral Health Campaign Manager, at mburroughs@familiesusa.org.

ORAL HEALTH ACTION HERO CHALLENGE RUNS THROUGH AUGUST 15

America's Tooth Fairy/DentaQuest program teaches kids how to prevent tooth decay

As children across the country stay close to home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, America's Tooth Fairy is helping them make good use of their time by learning about the prevention of tooth decay. The superhero-themed, Oral Health Action HERO Challenge, runs through August 15, 2020. During the campaign, kids will complete five educational missions to learn how to defeat the villain, "The Evil DK (Decay)", and keep their smiles healthy.

The campaign was developed after COVID-19 lockdowns brought most in-person group instruction and educational projects to a halt. Since the HERO Challenge can be completed by children at home, essential lessons that help kids prevent the consequences of tooth decay can continue. All participants who complete the missions will receive recognition as "Oral Health Action Heroes" and the first 25 kids to submit a video about what they learned will receive a prize package that includes a t-shirt, activity book and more. Three finalists will be selected to compete in an online voting program to determine who defeats "The Evil DK (Decay)" and wins the Champion Crystal trophy.

Kids must register online to participate and receive their mission instructions. More details about the

“Over seven decades of research have shown the dramatic decreases in dental caries as a result of community water fluoridation, not just in children but throughout the lifespan.”

-Chief Dental Officers' Statement of Support of Community Water Fluoridation

NEWS

[Eighth Wave of HPI Poll Shows Dental Care Rebound Slowing Down](#)

[American Cancer Society Advises Offering HPV Vaccine Starting at Age 9 or 10](#)

[The Dentist Will See You Now. But Should You Go?](#)

[Hollowed-Out Public Health System Faces More Cuts Amid Virus](#)

[A Record 5.4 Million Have Lost Health Insurance, Study Finds](#)

[New U.S. Dietary Guideline Recommendations Take Aim at Sugar for Children and Adults](#)

[Conflicting COVID Messages Create Cloud of Confusion Around Public Health and Prevention](#)

[Health Care Organizations Can Take Action Now to Promote Racial Justice](#)

ARTICLES

[Bombarded with Infection Control Advice? A New Resource from OSAP and DentaQuest Cuts Through the Clutter](#)

[Providers Worry about PPE, New Protocols](#)

[Coverage is Critical for Reducing Dental-Related ER-Use](#)

[Advancing Health Equity Through Telehealth Interventions During Covid-19 and Beyond: Policy Recommendations and Promising State Models](#)

[COVID-19 Transmission in Dental Practice: Brief Review of Preventive Measures in](#)

MD ADULT DENTAL WAIVER PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS



The Maryland Adult Dental Waiver Program is off to a terrific start! According to Maryland Medicaid, from June 1, 2019 December 31, 2019:

- 7,985 claims were submitted
- 4,247 unique members filed valid claims
- 294 members met annual \$800 cap
- 561 unique providers submitted claims
- \$1,355,266.96 paid

From January 1, 2020 - July 7, 2020:

- 3,498 claims were submitted
- 2,325 unique members filed valid claims
- 83 members met annual \$800 cap
- 460 unique providers submitted claims
- \$564,823.38 paid year-to-date

2018-2023 MARYLAND ORAL HEALTH PLAN GOALS

[Italy](#)

[Changes in Emergency Department Dental Visits After Medicaid Expansion](#)

[Systemic Racism Has Very Real Health Impact](#)

[Boosting Oral Health Care in Rural Communities](#)

[Building Capacity for Community Health Worker Integration: Three Key Steps State Policymakers Should Take During the Covid-19 Crisis and Beyond](#)

[Telemedicine Services During COVID-19: Considerations for Medically Underserved Populations](#)

[As COVID-19 Shifts Learning Online, FDI Supports Parents and Teachers with Digital Resources on Oral Health Education](#)

[Community Water Fluoridation: Water That's Good for Your Teeth](#)

WEBINARS

[Five Trainings for Health Professionals to Integrate Racial Equity Into Practice](#)

[The Impact of Racism on the Health and Well-Being of the Nation \(recorded\)](#)

[The Dental Care Rebound: How Far Have We Gotten and How Far Will We Go? \(recorded\)](#)

[CDC: Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response \(Recorded\)](#)

EVENTS

[AIDPH Summer Colloquium, August 4-5, 2020](#)

[Special Care Dentistry Association Annual Meeting, August 7-9, 2020](#)

[OSAP Annual Conference, August 13-15, 2020](#)

[Health Literacy in Action Conference, October 18-20, 2020](#)

[Maryland Rural Health Association Annual Conference \(virtual\), October 19 - 20, 2020](#)

[APHA 2020 Annual Meeting and Expo, October 24-28, 2020](#)

Maryland Oral Health Plan

2018 - 2023



*Framework to Improve
the Oral Health of All
Marylanders*

**MarylandDental
ActionCoalition**

The 2018-2023 Maryland Oral Health Plan outlines 11 oral health goals in three key areas:

Access to oral health care:

- All Maryland children have comprehensive dental insurance coverage through public (Medicaid/MCHP) or private insurance.
- All Maryland adults have comprehensive dental insurance coverage through Medicaid or private insurance.
- All Maryland residents have a dental home.
- Strengthen the oral health safety net provider system.
- Integrate the oral health care system within the medical health care system.

Oral disease and injury prevention:

- Use data to advance optimal oral health for all Marylanders.
- Improve public awareness of oral disease and injury prevention.
- Promote community-based oral disease and injury prevention programs.

Oral health literacy and education:

- 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.
- Educate medical professionals and students about the importance of the oral/systemic connection and foster

CONTINUING EDUCATION

[HPV, Cancer and Dental Providers, August 18, 2020](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE PLAN](#)

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

ORAL HEALTH RESOURCES

ORAL HEALTH POLICY

[Using Law and Policy to Promote the Use of Oral Health Services in the United States](#)

[The COVID-19 Pandemic and Resulting Economic Crash Have Caused the Greatest Health Insurance Losses in American History](#)

[Resources on Health Equity in the Context of COVID-19 and Disproportionate Outcomes for Marginalized Groups](#)

[Addressing Oral Health Inequities During COVID-19 and Beyond](#)

[The Fierce Urgency of Now: Federal and State Policy Recommendations to Address Health Inequities in the Era of Covid-19](#)

[Bridging Health Equity and Racial Justice During COVID-19 and Beyond](#)

[Public Policy Partners COVID-19 Resources](#)

Medicaid

[Inequities Amplified by COVID-19: Opportunities for Medicaid to Address Health Disparities](#)

[Early State Trends Signal Massive Surge in Medicaid Enrollment Related to COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 RESOURCES

[ADA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Center for Dentists](#)

[Guidance on Providing Dental Care During the Pandemic](#)

[Approaches for Prioritizing Care in Response to COVID-19](#)

[A Guide to Dental Visits During the COVID-19 Outbreak \(video\)](#)

[What You Need to Know About Handwashing \(video\)](#)

[Caring for Your Teeth During COVID-19](#)

[Steps to Take if a Patient Reports COVID-19 Exposure After Treatment](#)

[Patient Information for Waiting Rooms in Dental Practices \(video/no sound\)](#)

[OSAP/DQP Best Practices for Infection Control in Dental Clinics During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[Welcome to Teledentistry: Bringing Patient-Centered Care into the Synchronous Teledental Emergency Visit](#)

[CDC: Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response](#)

[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Resources for Health Departments](#)

LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

SUPPORT MDAC



RURAL HEALTH

[Rural Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[NRHA COVID-19 Resources](#)

ORAL DISEASE AND INJURY PREVENTION

[Brush Up on Oral Health: Community Water Fluoridation](#)

[Anesthesia and Sedation Used for Oral Healthcare](#)

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.

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

FOLLOW US

