

## **HYGIENIST SPEARHEADS INTEGRATION OF ORAL, OB CARE** **Mothers-to-be receive dental treatments, oral health education**

A push to integrate oral care into obstetrics (OB) care has resulted in improved oral health for hundreds of pregnant women on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Sharron Lewis, a registered public health dental hygienist at Chesapeake Health Care (CHC), routinely saw women who had broken teeth, abscesses, or were self-treating for oral pain. Since Maryland Medicaid provides dental coverage for pregnant women, Lewis recognized that pregnancy is an opportune time to help moms-to-be improve their oral health, as well as their overall health and that of their baby. When George Acs, DMD, MPH became the dental director of Chesapeake Health Care, Lewis found a strong ally who worked to make her vision a reality.

Although the integration of dental into a medical office was not easy, Lewis, with the support of Acs, found that good communication and hard work towards the common goal of keeping women healthy led to success. Dental records and infection control requirements did not fit into the medical model. Integrating dental and medical record software wasn't easy, but the addition of an OB completion code, which tracks the dental treatments a pregnant woman completes prior to delivery, was an important step forward. Lewis also developed her own forms and patient checklists, which she uses to educate patients on the importance of brushing with fluoridated toothpaste, drinking fluoridated tap water, and how their oral health can affect the health of their babies.

One of the major challenges initially faced was to pull patients aside to talk about the importance of good oral health during pregnancy without disrupting the flow of medical appointments. Since the obstetrics director was as invested in the integration as the dental director, that soon was resolved, and the nurse manager worked with Lewis to help ease the transition and make the medical and dental teams true partners in ensuring the oral and overall health of both mother and baby.



*Medicaid coverage during pregnancy can help women vastly improve their oral health, as seen in these pictures of a patient before and after treatment. Photos courtesy of Robert McCready, DDS, Chesapeake Health Care, Department of General Dentistry.*

Today dental care is fully integrated into obstetrics care at CHC, which gives mothers-to-be the opportunity for good dental health. The Salisbury OB office sees approximately 100 patients each day - about 95% of all pregnant mothers in the area. Twice a week, a public health hygienist is there to provide oral health education, explain the importance of oral health during pregnancy, apply fluoride varnish, and schedule appointments with the CHC dental office across the parking lot who specifically sees only obstetric and pediatric patients.

Lewis has found that pregnant women are more likely to keep their dental appointments if they are first seen at an appointment with their obstetrician. The dental team is also able to follow up on missed dental appointments at their next obstetrics appointment and track patients throughout their pregnancy. They work with patients to complete restorative work first to stop the decay process, and then address any other oral

health issues patients may have.

Lewis notes that one of the benefits of working in a medical office is the ability to case manage, especially in circumstances where there are language and culture barriers. "Many of our patients do not speak English, but with the help of translators in both OB and Dental we are able to educate and treat," Lewis added.

The program, which went into effect in 2017, has resulted in streamlining the divide between medical and dental care, and has raised awareness of the dental clinic in the community. Education and language are often barriers to good oral health, but a lack of dental coverage is a bigger barrier that can be addressed when pregnant women who come in for a medical appointment learn that they have Medicaid dental coverage during pregnancy. Lewis said, "We have an excellent staff of dentists who have given our moms a new lease on life. They have not only restored oral health and smiles but have given these patients a renewed sense of confidence and self esteem."

According to Lewis, some patients she has seen need full mouth extractions, but Medicaid does not cover dentures. If a patient has their teeth extracted to eliminate infection but cannot afford dentures, the unintended result is poor nutrition, the inability to secure employment, and impaired speech. Lewis has seen women in their late 20s and early 30s who have to eat soft foods, instead of nutritious fruits and vegetables, due to the overall poor condition of their oral health. Their babies end up eating the same diet high in carbs and low in more nutritious foods that are harder to chew.

So what's next? Chesapeake Health Care Dental is eager to integrate oral health education into prenatal classes, and to reach out especially to teenage mothers, many of whom would not or cannot afford to take prenatal classes. As Lewis said, "I cannot let an opportunity to break the cycle of poor oral health due to lack of education go by. We need to break that cycle with care and education, or else it will just continue to the next generation.

"We are very proud of our OB/Dental collaboration and look for ways to improve and expand the excellent care we are providing to our patients."

## **ACCU PROVIDES VITAL SERVICES TO MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES**

### **Excellent source of information on Medicaid benefits, how to find a provider, and more**

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Program Coordinator Kelly Gooding and her colleagues in the Administrative Care Coordination Unit (ACCU) at the Charles County Department of Health may not be front and center in most conversations about how to improve access to care for low-income Maryland residents. But they are heroes to the Medicaid beneficiaries in Charles County who need assistance to understand and use their benefits.

The ACCU program, an arm of the Maryland Department of Health - Office of Health Services Managed Care Administration, works to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Medicaid program by having locally available staff assist HealthChoice-eligible beneficiaries access and appropriately use their Medicaid benefits. Local ACCU staff also serve as ombudsmen who work to resolve complaints.

Navigating the health care system can be daunting, and especially so if your financial resources are limited, you do not have a way to get to and from doctor's appointments, or if you have limited English language skills. That's why the work of the ACCU is so critical.

Gooding works with Medicaid beneficiaries to explain the choice of managed care organizations (MCOs) and the annual right to change MCOs, find a care provider in their MCO network, get prescriptions filled, find a dentist for their child, or link them to Medicaid transportation services. She also provides guidance on health care services, such as prenatal care, that Medicaid beneficiaries can get out of network and without a referral.

For the nearly 1.4 million HealthChoice-eligible beneficiaries in Maryland, ACCU is a vital link to accessing and utilizing their Medicaid benefits. Maryland residents who have questions about their HealthChoice/Medicaid benefits can contact their county's ACCU Ombudsman Program at their local health department. For further information about the ACCU, visit <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/healthchoice/pages/home.aspx>.

## **AHEC WEST LAUNCHES DENTAL ACCESS: RECOVERY**

### **Addresses oral health needs of those recovering from addiction**

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AHEC West and its Health Right program recently launched Dental Access: Recovery, which provides oral healthcare services to Western Maryland residents recovering from addiction and in need of dental care. Funded by the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC), the two-year project will serve residents of Garrett, Allegany, and Washington counties who are in recovery from opioid, heroin, methamphetamine



and other addictions.

According to the American Dental Association, people who misuse opioids are more prone to poor oral health because of sugary diets, poor oral hygiene, the effects of certain addiction-related medications, and lack of financial means to see a dentist. A recent study involving more than 500 substance-dependent individuals found that 29 percent had lost six or more teeth, a rate three times higher than the general population.

Agencies providing services to those in recovery will refer clients in need of care. The Health Right case manager will then coordinate the delivery of needed oral healthcare services. The project also employs a Community Health Worker/Recovery Coach from the Mountain Health Alliance program at AHEC West to provide oral health education and assist in meeting social needs that support the recovery process.

The CHRC grant provides for a two-year project. Treatment partners in Dental Access: Recovery include the Allegany County Health Department, Garrett County Health Department, and Family Healthcare of Hagerstown, which provide services through their dental clinics. Referral partners include the Office of Consumer Advocates and a number of other agencies in the three-county region serving those in recovery.

For more information about Dental Access: Recovery, contact Jan Chippendale, Program Coordinator/Case Manager for Health Right at 301-777-9150 x-112 or by email at [jchippendale@ahecwest.org](mailto:jchippendale@ahecwest.org).

## **KIRWAN COMMISSION'S IMPACT ON SCHOOL HEALTH**

### **Register now for August 12 webinar**

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Learn about the Kirwan Commission's impact on school health at an August 12 [webinar](#) sponsored by MDAC, Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care, and Maryland Nurses Association.

Recent recommendations, legislative actions, and increased funding for school health services and school-based health centers will be discussed. Participants are asked to [register by Friday, August 9](#).

The Kirwan Commission was formed in 2016 to review and assess education financing and make recommendations on how to best to prepare Maryland students to compete in the workforce and the global economy.

## **NEW FACT SHEETS ON MEDICARE DENTAL COVERAGE RELEASED**

### **Oral health coverage in Medicare would improve health, reduce health care costs**

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*The open letter below is from Melissa Burroughs, Oral Health Campaign Manager at Families USA.*

Dear Partners,

Families USA is excited to release a new set of fact sheets, [Medicare Oral Health Coverage for \[Your State\] Would Improve Health, Reduce Health Care Costs](#).

These fact sheets highlight how, like a key to open a locked door, seniors and people with disabilities in each state would be better able to achieve oral health if Medicare were to include oral health coverage.

With these fact sheets, you can explain that Medicare oral health coverage is a much needed, responsible investment. Coverage would allow over 60 million people in this country to pay for the oral health care that we all need to stay healthy, reducing related health care costs. Read your state's fact sheet to learn more!

Want to take action? You can distribute this resource among your networks. Want to learn more about how to engage? Join the Action for Medicare Dental Learning Collaborative. Email Melissa Burroughs ([mburroughs@familiesusa.org](mailto:mburroughs@familiesusa.org)) to learn more.

To your health,  
Melissa Burroughs, Oral Health Campaign Manager

## **INTEGRATING ORAL, GENERAL HEALTH THROUGH HEALTH LITERACY**

### **Workshop proceedings released by the National Academies of Science**

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Oral health care and medical health care both seek to maintain and enhance human health and well-being. Yet, oral care and primary care in the United States are largely separated and isolated from each

other.

On December 6, 2018, in Washington, DC, the Roundtable on Health Literacy of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine held a workshop that featured invited presentations and discussion on the ways in which health literacy principles and practices can facilitate the integration of oral and general health. The workshop also provided an opportunity to build on the commissioned paper and on the roundtable's previous efforts related to oral health.

The workshop proceedings, released by the National Academies of Science, can be found [here](#).

## **WORLD CAVITY FREE FUTURE DAY IS OCTOBER 14, 2019**

### **Resources available to raise awareness of dental caries and how to prevent them**

World Cavity-Free Future Day (WCFFDay), an initiative by the Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future (ACFF), works to address the need for greater global awareness of dental caries, the disease which, when left unaddressed, can lead to dental cavities. In addition, ACFF focuses on the wider issues that stem from poor dental health and raises global awareness about best practices for the prevention and management of caries and cavities.



World Cavity Free Future Day aims to engage communities around the world in this global fight and offers the chance to send a "wake-up call" to those with the ability to make social, economic, and political changes to encourage action towards achieving a cavity-free future.

#### **Why is World Cavity-Free Future Day Important?**

Dental caries is the most common chronic disease on the planet, despite being largely preventable. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), worldwide 60–90% of school children and nearly 100% of adults suffer from cavities, which can dramatically impact the sufferers' quality of life through pain and discomfort, missed days or decreased participation in school and work. Additionally, the economic impact of costly treatment, which remains unaffordable to many of those patients in the disenfranchised communities who suffer most, can contribute as an added strain.

Helping individuals understand the importance of taking control of their oral health, starting by brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and reducing their frequency of sugar intake, is a key step on the road towards reducing the number of people who develop cavities and helping secure a cavity-free future for generations to come.

[Check the MDAC website](#) for further information about World Cavity Free Future Day and downloadable resources for families and dental providers.

## **MDAC LAUNCHES NEW HEALTHY TEETH, HEALTHY KIDS WEBSITES**

### **Sites in English, Spanish focus on importance of good oral health for children**



The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) has launched newly updated [Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids websites](#) in English and Spanish.

Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids and its Spanish language counterpart, Dientes Sanos, Niños Sanos, help educate parents about oral disease prevention behaviors and the important role oral health plays in their child's development.

MDAC thanks its Oral Health Literacy and Education Committee (co-chairs Alice Horowitz and John Welby and members Wenzell Carter, DDS, Carol Caiazzo, RDH, Cheryl deAtley, and Dorian Birkholz) for their hard work to update and refresh the highly successful Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids social marketing campaign. MDAC would also like to thank the MDH Office of Oral Health for its support, without which this would not have been possible. Their can-do attitudes, knowledge, and expertise are very much appreciated!

**"Bacteria live in unbelievable mixtures of hundreds or thousands of species. Like on your teeth. There are 600 species of bacteria on your teeth every morning."**

*-Bonnie Bassler - American molecular biologist*

## NEWS

[We Have a Dental Care Crisis. Medicare for All Could Solve It.](#)

[Social Determinants of Health Data Can Be Difficult to Collect and Share, But It's Imperative to Success](#)

[Big Sugar and Neglect by Global Health Community Fuel Oral Health Crisis](#)

[August JADA Finds Sealed Primary Molars Have Lower Caries Risk](#)

[Delta Dental Launches New National Oral Health Institute](#)

[10 Common Oral Hygiene Mistakes, According to Dentists](#)

[Is Juuling Bad for Your Teeth? Here's What You Should Know](#)

## ARTICLES

[Oral Diseases: A Global Public Health Challenge](#)

[Ending the Neglect of Global Oral Health: Time for Radical Action](#)

[How Your Oral Health Is Tied to Overall Wellness](#)

[Measles: Information for Dental Settings](#)

[Integrating Oral and General Health Through Health Literacy Practices: Proceedings of a Workshop](#)

[Study: Medicaid Block Grants and Per Capita Caps Would Risk Families' Oral Health](#)

[For Most Seniors, Oral Health Goes Uncovered](#)

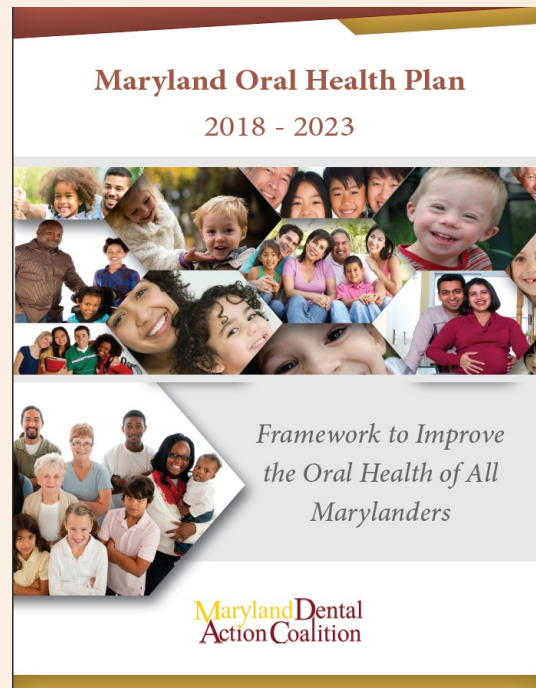
[Proper Oral Care Can Reduce Risk of Pneumonia](#)

[Interdisciplinary Approaches for Improved Oral Health: Building the Field through Integrated and Community-Based Health Practices](#)

[Report Examines Connections Between Expanded Adult Medicaid Coverage And Maternal Health](#)

[How Drug Abuse Affects Dental Health](#)

## 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:

- 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



[Thought Leader Roundtable on Oral Health and Chronic Disease in Older Adults: Summary Report and Key Recommendations](#)

[FDI Experts Publish Guidance on Antibiotic Stewardship in Dentistry](#)

[Fluoride Revolution and Dental Caries: Evolution of Policies for Global Use](#)

## EVENTS

[National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing and Media, August 13-15, 2019](#)

[National CAMBRA Coalition Conference, August 15-16, 2019](#)

[National Academy for State Health Policy Conference, August 21-23, 2019](#)

[ADA FDI World Dental Congress, September 4-8, 2019](#)

[MSDA Chesapeake Dental Conference, September 20-22, 2019](#)

[Health Literacy in Action Conference, October 10-11, 2019](#)

[2019 National Network for Oral Health Access Annual Conference, October 13-16, 2019](#)

[SOPHE Annual Advocacy Summit, October 19-21, 2019](#)

[2019 Maryland Rural Health Association Conference, October 20-22, 2019](#)

[APHA Annual Meeting and Expo, November 2-6, 2019](#)

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 collaboration between medical and dental disciplines and communities.

[Download the plan now!](#)

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

## WEBINARS

[Talking About Vaccines: Lessons Learned from CDC Research with Parents and Healthcare Professionals, August 1, 2019](#)

[Kirwan Commission's Impact on School Health, August 12, 2019](#)

[HIV and Oral Health: An Update and Refocus, August 20, 2019](#)



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## ORAL HEALTH RESOURCES

### ACCESS TO ORAL HEALTH CARE

#### Medicaid

[Medicaid Dental Guidance to States: An Opportunity to Aim for Equity](#)

[A Checklist for Advocates: Improving Children's Oral Health Care in Medicaid/CHIP](#)

#### Medicare

### ORAL DISEASE AND INJURY PREVENTION

[Promoting Oral Health in Schools: A Resource Guide](#)

[Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles](#)

[Sports Dentistry: Toolkit for Sports Organizations](#)

[FDA "The Real Cost" E-cigarette Prevention Posters](#)

[Creating an Oral Health Benefit in Medicare: A Statutory Analysis](#)

[An Oral Health Benefit in Medicare Part B: It's Time to Include Oral Health in Health Care](#)

## Policy

[Putting Teeth in Medicare for All: An August Recess Toolkit for Oral Health](#)

[Study: Medicaid Block Grants and Per Capita Caps Would Risk Families' Oral Health](#)

[Improving Oral Health in Maine: Key Lessons for Policy Advocates](#)

## RURAL HEALTH

[The Rural Primary Care Practice Guide to Creating Interprofessional Oral Health Networks](#)

[Maryland Rural Health Plan](#)

[CMS Rural Health Strategy](#)

## LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

[HPV Vaccine is a Lifesaver](#)

## ORAL HEALTH LITERACY AND EDUCATION

[ASTDD Oral Health Educational Resources for Home Visitors and Families: Environmental Scan](#)

[CDC: Tips for Teachers](#)

[AAP: Protect Tiny Teeth Toolkit](#)

## PROVIDER RESOURCES

[Opioids and Children and Adolescents: Information for Oral Health Professionals](#)

[Addressing Tobacco in Dental Settings: A Resource for Dental Professionals](#)

[Sports Dentistry: Guidelines for Dentists and Sports Medicine Physicians](#)

[Oral Health Care During Pregnancy: Practice Guidance for Maryland's Prenatal and Dental Providers](#)

[Answering Questions About HPV Vaccine: A Guide for Dental Professionals](#)



MDAC is pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Michael Exler, DDS, FAGD - Guardian Life
- Dara Ruff, RN - Kent County Medical Adult Day Care
- Laura Smith, RDH - Howard Community College

Join us! To become a MDAC member, [click here](#).

## CONTACT

Do you have events or announcements you'd like to share? Contact MDAC, and we'll make every effort

## JOIN

MDAC is statewide coalition of clinical care providers, governments, non-profits, academic

to include them in our next newsletter, as space permits.

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.

[Contact MDAC](#)

[Join MDAC](#)

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