



June 2019

MEDICAID ADULT DENTAL WAIVER PROGRAM LAUNCHED!

Appointments made; services provided



The June 1, 2019 launch of the Medicaid adult dental waiver program marks the culmination of more than four years of hard work and collaboration by MDAC members, partners, and stakeholders to improve access to affordable dental care for Maryland adults.

Waiver program serves population that had no dental benefits

The statewide waiver program will provide access to diagnostic, preventive and basic restorative dental services, as well as extractions, to the more than 33,000 adults dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare (e.g. low income and with a qualifying disability), up to an annual cap of \$800.00.

\$1,600 benefit cap for first 18 months will give patients a good start on treatment plans

Although the benefit went into effect mid-year, Medicaid will cover \$800 in dental services for 2019. Program participants will have coverage for up to \$1,600 in dental services during the first 18 months of the program. This will enable patients, many of whom may have extensive treatment needs, to work with their provider to develop a plan that addresses their most serious dental issues in a timely manner.

Eligible participants are accessing care

Prior to program launch, Medicaid mailed "welcome packets" to eligible participants in the Medicaid adult dental waiver program to inform them of their new dental benefit.

Although the adult dental waiver program has been in effect for less than a month, eligible participants are already making appointments and receiving dental care.

The need for full Medicaid adult dental coverage is great

Many Maryland adults face serious financial obstacles to obtaining dental care, which can lead to serious oral health issues that drive them to the emergency room with tooth pain and oral infections. Emergency rooms are unable to treat the causes of dental pain, so they treat the symptoms and send patients home with antibiotics, pain medications, or referrals for dental services that patients may not be able to afford.

In fiscal year 2016, Maryland adults made 42,327 emergency department visits for chronic dental conditions, with an average charge of \$537 per visit, or a total charge of \$22.7 million. These visits represent almost two percent of overall emergency room costs. Medicaid paid for 53 percent of those visits, even though Medicaid participants only account for 15 percent of the adult population in Maryland - likely the result of a lack of consistent adult dental coverage in the Medicaid program.

Waiver program milestone on path to full Medicaid adult dental benefits

The launch of the adult dental waiver program is a significant step forward in demonstrating that a Medicaid adult dental benefit that enables adults to establish a dental home, obtain preventive care, and avert costly dental conditions is a good investment in both health outcomes and the fiscal health of Medicaid. MDAC is deeply grateful to former Senator Thomas "Mac" Middleton (D-Charles County), Senator Guy Guzzone (D-Howard County), and Delegate Mike McKay (R-Washington and Allegany Counties) for their leadership and support of SB 284, which established the waiver program, and to the Maryland General Assembly for its unanimous passage.

HOGAN SIGNS COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINIC GRANTS BILL

Paves way to institute, expand dental services in community health centers

On May 13, Governor Larry Hogan signed SB158/HB332 - The Maryland Department of Health –

Community Dental Clinic Grants Program into law, a bill that will establish a capital grants program to institute or expand dental services in community health centers. Senator Guy Guzzone (D-Howard County) sponsored the bill in the Senate, and Delegate Mike McKay (R-Washington and Allegany Counties) in the House. MDAC strongly supported the bill.

In 2018, MDAC surveyed community health centers and found that between 75% and 85% thought that capital grant support would be important in establishing or expanding dental capacity. The Community Dental Clinic Grants program will provide capital support for dental equipment, the renovation of a dental suite, or the purchase of space - investments that can be difficult for community health centers because they also invest significant resources into providing for the uninsured. This bill will strengthen the oral health safety net provider system to serve the growing number of Marylanders needing immediate and ongoing dental care.



“The Community Dental Clinic Grants Program will provide much-needed funding to increase the capacity of community health centers to treat the growing number of low-income Maryland adults who rely on them for dental care,” said Senator Guy Guzzone.

Delegate Mike McKay added, “Good oral health is an integral part of good overall health, yet many Marylanders lack access to dental care. Community health centers will now have a source of funding to establish or expand dental services, particularly in rural areas of the state where it is often difficult to access care.”

Chrisie Mulcahey, Executive Director of Health Partners, a community health center based in Charles County said, “The Community Dental Clinic Grants Program will help community health centers like Health Partners increase our capacity to serve the growing number of children and adults in our community who are uninsured or on Medicaid. This program will help ensure that all Marylanders will be able to access the dental care they need, regardless of their financial circumstances.”

“MDAC applauds Senator Guy Guzzone and Delegate Mike McKay for their continued leadership to improve the oral and overall health of all Marylanders, and the Maryland General Assembly for its support of another key piece of legislation to expand access to dental care,” said MDAC Executive Director Mary Backley. “Community health centers and private providers are critical components of any Medicaid provider network. To improve access to dental services for children and adults with Medicaid, we need to build dental capacity and expand provider participation in the Medicaid program. All children in Medicaid have dental coverage. With the implementation of the Medicaid adult dental waiver program and a capital funding program to build capacity, Maryland is taking a significant step forward to improve dental coverage and access to care for adults.”

MEDICAID COLLABORATIVE HARD AT WORK

Initiatives underway to support Medicaid adult dental waiver program

MDAC’s Medicaid adult dental collaborative, a group of dental providers, social service professionals, and caregivers statewide, is working to help ensure the success of the Medicaid adult dental waiver program. Over the past several months, MDAC and its collaborative members have initiated the following activities in support of the waiver program:

Ensure that eligible participants are aware of their new benefit and how to access it

Medicaid sent eligible participants a welcome packet to inform them of their new Medicaid dental benefit. MDAC reviewed the draft packets and provided feedback to Medicaid.

MDAC worked with the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) to disseminate information to their members about the waiver program.

MDAC made presentations to statewide social service agencies to help ensure care management staff are aware of the new dental benefits available to their clients.

Increase the number of Medicaid providers and build capacity to serve the dual-eligible population

The Maryland Department of Health reached out to dentists currently enrolled in Maryland Healthy Smiles,

Medicaid's dental program for children, to identify providers who can accept dual-eligible adults into their practices. Medicaid and MDAC are working together to recruit additional providers not currently enrolled in Healthy Smiles to see these new patients.

Nearly 60 clinicians who intend to see adult patients under the Medicaid adult dental waiver program attended a MDAC-hosted continuing education class on treating patients with anxiety and special needs. Dr. Harvey Levy, a Frederick-based dentist who frequently works with patients who need special care, led the class and provided practical tips, tools, and techniques to treat anxious and special needs patients. MDAC secured CEUs from the State Board of Dental Examiners to encourage provider participation.

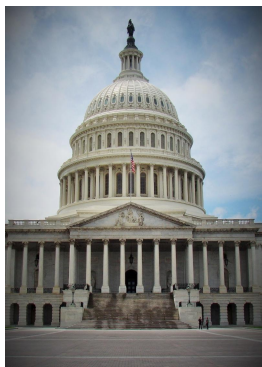
MDAC is coordinating with the state's credentialing vendor, Automated Health Systems, on technical assistance and training options for providers registering to participate in the Maryland Healthy Smiles program via e-Prep.

Evaluate the program, make course corrections as necessary, and provide feedback to Medicaid.

MDAC and several collaborative members met with potential evaluation partners to discuss data collection methodologies

MEDICARE DENTAL BENEFIT ACT INTRODUCED IN U.S. HOUSE

Bill Would Improve Access to Dental Care for Seniors, People with Disabilities



The legislative updates below are from Melissa Burroughs, Oral Health Campaign Manager at Families USA:

On May 23, 2019, U.S. Representative Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-CA) introduced the [Medicare Dental Benefit Act of 2019, H.R. 2951](#). This legislation has now been introduced in both chambers of Congress, with [its corollary, S.22](#), introduced by Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), in January. The introduction of the Medicare Dental Benefit Act in both chambers is yet another milestone in recent efforts to elevate the need for improved oral health coverage in public health care programs.

The Medicare Dental Benefit Act would add dental coverage to Part B of the Medicare program, meaning that millions of seniors and people with disabilities could access the dental services the same way they are covered for other services they need to support their overall health.

Organizations including Families USA, Children's Dental Health Project, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Justice in Aging, Community Catalyst, Santa Fe Group, American Association of Public Health Dentistry, American Dental Hygienists' Association, and National Dental Association are supporting H.R. 2951, which enhances the public perception of oral health as integral for overall health, integrates dental benefits with other health coverage, and opens the door for millions of Americans to access the care they need. This bill adds even more energy to the on-going conversation about the importance of oral health. Thank you all for your continued work on this issue!

New Bill Would Improve Access for Seniors, People with Disabilities, Low-Income Populations

On May 14, Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and the Senate Special Committee on Aging introduced the Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act of 2019, S.1423. This represents another milestone in recent efforts to underscore the need for improved coverage of oral health benefits in public health care programs.

S.1423 would add a dental benefit to Part B of the Medicare program, ensuring seniors and people with disabilities have access to the dental services they need to manage chronic conditions and support their oral and overall health. It would also provide increased reimbursement to states that choose to cover adult dental benefits in their Medicaid program. Because adult dental benefits are currently optional for state Medicaid programs, S.1423 would provide a financial incentive for states to cover the comprehensive dental services people with Medicaid coverage need. This would also open up an opportunity for oral health advocates to stress the importance and cost effectiveness of dental benefits in their states' Medicaid program.

The bill is supported by national partners in the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN), including Community Catalyst, Families USA, American Dental Hygienists' Association, DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement, Justice in Aging, Center for Medicare Advocacy, and Children's Dental Health Project.

NEW REPORT ON DENTAL CARE AMONG ADULTS OVER AGE 65

CDC notes disparities in access to care based on race, income, age

Dental care is often an overlooked aspect of overall health care among older adults. Although regular dental care is recommended for all older adults, they may have trouble accessing appropriate dental care because Medicare does not cover it.

[Dental Care Among Adults Aged 65 and Over, 2017](#), a new report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), found large disparities in access to dental care based on age, income, and race:

- In 2017, slightly less than one-third (29.2%) of adults aged 65 and over had dental insurance. The percentage with dental insurance was higher among those aged 65–74 (34.3%) compared with older age groups, and lower among Hispanic adults (17.5%) compared with other race and Hispanic-origin groups.
- Overall, approximately two-thirds of adults aged 65 and over had a dental visit in the past 12 months. Older adults who were poor (42.7%) or near poor (42.8%) were less likely to have had a dental visit compared with not-poor (74.4%) older adults.
- Non-Hispanic black (11.2%) and Hispanic (12.3%) adults aged 65 and over were more likely to have unmet need for dental care due to cost compared with non-Hispanic white (6.8%) and non-Hispanic Asian (5.9%) older adults.

Dental care is an important component of health care for older adults. Chronic diseases common among the older population, such as diabetes and osteoporosis, may impact oral health and the need for care, and poor oral health may contribute to the risk of certain conditions. The percentage of older adults with dental insurance is lower, in general, than the percentage with private insurance who have dental coverage among the population under age 65.

CDC ISSUES STATE HIV PREVENTION PROFILES

Maryland had fifth highest rate of new HIV diagnoses in nation in 2017

New state HIV prevention profiles issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highlight, by state, the opportunities, challenges, and investments in HIV prevention.

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) harms the immune system by destroying the white blood cells that fight infection. HIV increases the risk of serious infections and certain cancers. The final stage of infection with HIV is acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, AIDS.

State profiles include the number of people with HIV, the number of annual diagnoses, the percent of people with HIV who are unaware of their infection, and the number of individuals prescribed PrEP, a pre-exposure prophylaxis pill for those at high risk for HIV.

In 2017, there were 1,029 new HIV diagnoses in Maryland – the fifth highest rate in the nation. While 86% of Marylanders with HIV are aware of their status, 14% - or approximately 5,300 people – are not getting the care they need. The national goal for the percentage of people with HIV who know their status is 90%.

Major developments in HIV science, prevention, and treatment have produced a once-in-a-generation opportunity to eliminate new HIV infections in the United States – including Maryland – by using the right practices in the right places targeted to the right people. CDC awarded \$15.4 million to Maryland health departments and community-based organizations for HIV prevention activities, including HIV testing, diagnosis, and linkage to care.

Learn more about HIV in Maryland [here](#). For information on HIV prevention, click [here](#).

MDAC LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) launched a new website to make it easier for coalition members and other oral health stakeholders to access the latest news, reports, and information on activities to improve oral health in Maryland.

The website includes information on key MDAC initiatives, including the Maryland Oral Health Plan; Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids; and the Medicaid adult dental waiver program and actions taken by the Medicaid collaborative to ensure program success. MDAC reports, state legislative reports, and oral health resources are also on the site.

Check it out! If you'd like to see additional resources on the site, please let us know by e-mailing info@mdac.us.



OOH RUNS TELEVISION, TRANSIT ADVERTISING

Reminds patients to have their blood pressure checked during dental visits



The Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral (OOH) is encouraging Marylanders to have their blood pressure checked when they visit the dentist.

The “Two Minutes with Your Dentist Can Save Your Life” hypertension advertising campaign recently ran in the Baltimore area for seven weeks, reaching more than half a million viewers five to six times over the course of the schedule. In addition, transit advertising in support of the program appeared on more than 130 buses in the Baltimore area during the ad campaign.

Fourteen counties statewide have participated in the highly successful initiative to provide hypertension screens during routine dental visits and, if needed, refer patients to a primary care physician for appropriate medical care. Of the more than 21,900 patients statewide screened for hypertension, 1,768 were referred to a primary care provider, and 1,898 were identified as tobacco users.

AIDPH LAUNCHES "ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE"

New podcast on emerging public health trends

Anecdotal Evidence, a new podcast sponsored by The American Institute of Dental Public Health (AIDPH) and hosted by Annaliese Cothron, focuses on public health topics including evidence-based practice, leadership, cultural responsiveness, mentorship, and collaboration. Conversations with national leaders invite bold and innovative responses to emerging public health trends. Weekly episodes, supported by funding through the Health Resources and Services Administration, can be found on [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#), and [Google Play](#).

JOIN ORAL HEALTH PROGRESS AND EQUITY NETWORK

National network works to break down barriers to oral health care



Oral health is vital to overall health, yet there are barriers in place that, like locked doors, prevent people from accessing oral care. The Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) is a national network of individuals and organizations that believe oral health is essential to overall health and well-being. By focusing on early access and prevention for children, care and coverage across the lifespan, ensuring that oral health is integrated into overall healthcare, and

creating a new social norm for what it means to be healthy, OPEN is building an environment in which all individuals will have a full set of keys to access good oral health and thrive.

MDAC is a member of OPEN. You can join, too. [Sign up on Socius](#), OPEN's e-community, to get the latest news and updates on the impact being made across the country, participate in discussions, access resources and technical assistance from experts, make new connections, and share learnings with hundreds of others working to make our country healthier.

OPEN issues quarterly digest that outlines impact of federal policies on oral health of immigrants

The Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) has issued its first [quarterly digest](#) of the Immigrant Justice Network Response Team. The digest features articles, reports, and advocacy opportunities around the oral health impact of immigration policies. A downloadable [infographic](#) that outlines how social and economic factors impact oral health, especially for immigrant families, is also included.

"I am trying to inspire people to just take control of their oral health, because if we don't take care of our oral health, it affects so many different aspects of our lives. If your smile and mouth is not together, it affects your relationship, your self-esteem, your health."

-Sherri Shepherd, American actress, comedian, author, and television personality

NEWS

[Saving the Teeth of Patients With Special Needs](#)

[Who's Going to Take Care of These People?](#)

[Addressing Rural Seniors' Unmet Needs For Oral Health Care](#)

[CDC: Dental Care Often Overlooked for Older Americans](#)

[Fluoride Foes Rack Up Wins, Flummoxing Oral Health Advocates](#)

[Don't Rinse After Brushing and Other Tips for Better Dental Health](#)

[Dental Infections in Kids Tied to Heart Disease Risk in Adulthood](#)

[Drinking Water Linked to Fewer Sugary Drinks-and Calories-in Kids](#)

ARTICLES

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

[For Those With Developmental Disabilities, Dental Needs Are Great, Good Care Elusive](#)

[Hours Lost to Planned and Unplanned Dental Visits Among US Adults](#)

[Something to Chew On: Highlights of Findings from an AARP Oral Health Survey of Older Americans](#)

[Examining Medicare and Oral Health Coverage](#)

[Lack of Routine Dental Care Under Medicare Continues to Rankle](#)

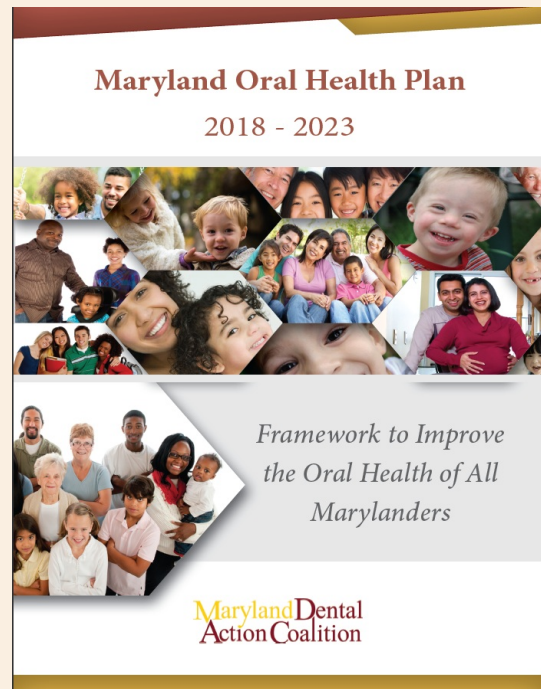
[The E-Cigarette Debate: What Counts as Evidence?](#)

[Comparison of Opioid Prescribing by Dentists in the United States and England](#)

[Leading Children's Health and Medical Groups React to Staggering Decline in Children's Enrollment in Public Health Insurance Coverage](#)

[Pediatric Dentists Who Accept New Medicaid-Enrolled Children Report Higher](#)

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 services providers so that patients

[Willingness to Advocate for Community Water Fluoridation](#)

[Association between Medical Well-Child Visits and Dental Preventive Visits: A Big Data Report](#)

[Childhood Trauma Tied to Tooth Loss Later in Life](#)

[The Impact of Chronic Underfunding of America's Public Health System: Trends, Risks, and Recommendations, 2019](#)

[Twenty Years Of School-Based Health Care Growth And Expansion](#)

[Trends in Health Philanthropy: Oral Health Care Access and Equity](#)

[50-State Survey: State Laws and Regulations Addressing Fluoridation in Water](#)

[Improving Access to Oral Healthcare: A Snapshot of State Initiatives](#)

[QuickStats: Percentage of Adults Aged ≥18 Years Who Have Lost All of Their Natural Teeth, by Age Group — National Health Interview Survey, 2000 and 2017](#)

[Children's Oral Health and Academic Performance: Evidence of a Persisting Relationship Over the Last Decade in the United States](#)

[Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity](#)

[Opportunities to Advance Complex Care in Rural and Frontier Areas](#)

[Broken Smiles: The Impact of Untreated Dental Caries and Missing Anterior Teeth on Employment](#)

[Putting the Mouth Back in the Body is Health Literacy Work](#)

[Oral Health and Diabetes in Patients Experiencing Homelessness](#)

[CWRU Dental School Researchers Awarded \\$4.2 Million to Study Seniors' Oral Health](#)

[Older Adults: The Long and Winding Road To Address Their Needs](#)

[A History of Innovations in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Oral and Head and Neck Cancer](#)

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.

EVENTS

[National Association of County and City Health Officials Annual Conference, July 9-11, 2019](#)

[106th Annual National Dental Association Convention, July 17-21, 2019](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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ACCESS TO ORAL HEALTH CARE

Medicaid

[Medicaid Expansion Across the Country: A Check-In on Recent Ballot Initiatives](#)

[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

[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

[Oral Health Advocacy Toolkit for Dental Schools and Dental Hygiene Programs](#)

RURAL HEALTH

[For Rural Seniors, Improving Oral Health Care Could Mean Better Health](#)

[Social Determinants of Health for Rural People](#)

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

[Maryland Rural Health Plan](#)

[CMS Rural Health Strategy](#)

ORAL DISEASE AND INJURY PREVENTION

[E-Cigarettes Shaped Like USB Flash Drives: Information for Parents, Educators, and Health Care Providers](#)

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

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

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

[How Community Water Fluoridation Prevents Tooth Decay](#)

[HPV Vaccine is a Lifesaver](#)

[Diabetes and Oral Health](#)

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

ORAL HEALTH LITERACY AND EDUCATION

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

[CDC: Tips for Teachers](#)

[AAP: Protect Tiny Teeth Toolkit](#)

LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)



MDAC is pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Joseph Dumbuya, DMD

- Jaclyn Jameson, RDH, BS - Health Partners
- Mary Ann T. Schneiderman, RDH, MS - University of Maryland School of Dentistry

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

[Contact MDAC](#)

JOIN

MDAC is statewide coalition of clinical care providers, governments, non-profits, academic institutions, managed care organizations, foundations and associations working collaboratively to improve the health of all Marylanders through increased oral health promotion, disease prevention, education, advocacy and access to oral health care.

[Join MDAC](#)

www.mdac.us

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