



September 2020

HHS RELEASES RURAL ACTION PLAN

First HHS-wide assessment of rural healthcare in 18 years



On September 3, 2020, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released the [Rural Action Plan](#) to strengthen HHS departmental coordination and better serve the millions of Americans who live in rural communities. It is the first HHS-wide assessment of rural healthcare efforts in more than 18 years.

Eighteen HHS agencies and offices took part in developing the plan, which includes 71 new or expanded activities for FY 2020 and beyond. Efforts that will be undertaken in FY 2020 include nine new rural-focused administrative or regulatory actions, three new rural-focused technical assistance efforts, 14 new rural research efforts, and five new

rural program efforts. These efforts build on 94 new rural-focused projects launched over the past three years.

The [Rural Action Plan](#) examines key challenges facing rural communities, such as emerging health disparities, chronic disease burden, high rates of maternal mortality, and limited access to mental health services. The plan lays out a four-point strategy to transform rural health and human services by building a sustainable health and human services model for rural communities; leveraging technology and innovation; focusing on preventing disease and mortality; and increasing rural access to care.

THIS ELECTION, RAISE THE PROFILE OF ORAL HEALTH

Your voice needed to raise importance of oral health to overall health

You can help raise the profile of oral health in the context of the 2020 election and help candidates understand the need to address oral health in their commitments to health care. With healthcare as a major voter issue, this election year is critical and provides opportunities for expanding coverage in Medicare and Medicaid. However, in order to elevate the importance of oral health, we need your help! Our voice as a collective is powerful, and so is your voice as a constituent.



How you can participate:

Use OPEN's (Oral Health Progress and Equity Network) [Virtual Day of Action Guide](#) to select one or more of the following virtual activities:

- Contact your candidates
- Share your story on social media
- Commit to hosting a virtual gathering
- Complete the "Ready, Set, VOTE" template

Who can participate:

- Anyone interested in lifting up the importance of oral health in the 2020 elections! All activities are designed to be allowable for 501(c)(3) organizations.

Resources to make your participation fun and easy:

- [2020 Medicare Dental Advocacy Guide](#)
- [Oral Health Questions to Ask Your Candidates](#)
- Informational one-pagers* (designed for both conservative and progressive audiences)
 - [Protect Older Adults](#)
 - [Let's Give American Workers Their Money's Worth](#)
 - [Why Oral Health is Critical Now](#)

The Horowitz Center for Health Literacy at the University of Maryland School of Public Health has developed a non-partisan voter's guide, [Voting with Health in Mind: Questions to Ask Candidates for Public Office](#). The guide uses Healthy People 2030's Social Determinants of Health Framework to help voters find out their candidates' stances on health and health-related issues. This exercise helps voters build their critical health literacy.

The guide includes questions (and spaces for answers) from several categories:

- Economic stability
- Education
- Healthcare
- Neighborhood
- Community

MDAC encourages you to use these tools and resources to help your communities be ready and informed to vote on November 3!

ORAL HEALTH CARE IMPORTANT DURING PREGNANCY

Community Catalyst outlines need and policy considerations, recommendations



Community Catalyst recently released a [paper](#) on the importance of oral health care during pregnancy, noting that it is a priority for the health of the pregnant person as well as the future health of their infant and child. Although dental care during pregnancy has been shown to reduce children's risk of developing dental caries, many historically marginalized people, including African Americans, Latinos, and low-income populations lack access to basic oral health care. Oral health issues during pregnancy can lead to higher risks for poor birth outcomes, including low birth weight, preterm delivery, and risk of preeclampsia. [Learn more](#) about the importance of health care during

pregnancy, policy considerations, and recommendation for advocates working to increase access to oral health care.

Maryland Medicaid covers dental services during pregnancy, and beginning on January 1, 2021, for 60 days postpartum – an important milestone as MDAC continues to work towards a Medicaid dental benefit for all Maryland adults.

MD HEALTH CONNECTION EXTENDS ENROLLMENT PERIOD

Enrollment deadline December 15

As part of Maryland's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Maryland Health Connection, the state-based health insurance marketplace, extended the special enrollment period to December 15, 2020. All eligible, uninsured Marylanders may qualify for this emergency special enrollment period.

"The people of our great state have endured so many personal, medical, and economic challenges, and this crisis is not yet behind us," said Governor Hogan. "Reopening the special enrollment period is another way we are helping Marylanders weather this storm, get back on their feet, and recover."

Maryland Health Connection plans cover testing, visits relating to testing, and treatment of COVID-19. Consumers will not be billed for a copay, coinsurance, or deductible for services to test, diagnose, and treat COVID-19. Marylanders do not need to be sick to enroll in coverage. This special enrollment is for private health plans only. Those who qualify for Medicaid may enroll any time of year. To enroll, visit MarylandHealthConnection.gov.

HEALTHY KIDS MEAL BILL INTRODUCED IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Diverse coalition supports bill to ensure healthy meal and beverage options

On September 22, 2020, Prince George's County Councilmember Sydney J. Harrison introduced the Prince George's County Healthy Kids' Meals Bill (CB-071) to the County Council. A diverse coalition led by Sugar Free Kids Maryland, Prince George's Food Equity Council, American Heart Association and Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) supports the bill.

The proposed legislation would make water, milk and 100% fruit juice the default beverage options for all kids' meals served at Prince George's County restaurants. It would also ensure options in kids' meals that would limit calories, sugar, salt and fat. Families would be able to order other beverage items upon request. The bill will improve health for county children by making the healthy choice



the easy choice.

The children of Prince George's County are becoming more at risk for developing chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease at alarming rates. The major contributing factor to these problems is the overconsumption of sugary drinks. These preexisting conditions are now putting people at higher risk of becoming severely ill after contracting COVID-19.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear to all of us that developing chronic diseases can have devastating health effects on communities," said Shawn McIntosh, executive director of Sugar Free Kids Maryland. "Healthier choices lead to healthier diets and lower susceptibility to chronic diseases. County Executive Alsobrooks and the Prince George's County Council have the opportunity to ensure that healthy choices will be easier to make for county families so that their children can have better opportunities to live long, healthy lives."

MDAC's [Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids](#) website gives parents of young children easy-to-follow guidance on how to keep their child's mouth healthy for life. Parents can [prevent cavities](#) for their child by limiting sugary beverages and treats and providing well-balanced meals consisting of fresh foods, such as fruits and vegetables, salads, dairy, lean meats and fish. MDAC supports efforts, such as the legislation introduced in Prince George's County, to help parents and children make healthy food and beverage choices.

6 TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

What you drink is more important than you think!

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

Choosing healthy drinks can result in overall healthier lifestyles.

#1 Quit the Sugar Habit

By cutting out sugary beverages you could better maintain your weight, lower your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and help prevent you developing cavities.

#2 Increase your water intake

Carry a water bottle with you and refill it throughout the day. Adding slices of lemon, lime, cucumber or watermelon makes water more exciting. Drink 8-12 glasses of water/day.

#3 Beware of sports beverages

Sports beverages contain sugar and are designed for athletes doing high-intensity workouts. Water is the best choice to stay hydrated.

#4 Pull the plug on energy drinks

These drinks are loaded with sugar and caffeine that can raise your blood pressure. Many energy drinks have lots of additives that could have long - term health effects.

#5 Switch from fruit juice to whole fruits

Children get too much sugar from fruit juice - it isn't as healthy as people think. Whole fruits have fewer calories, are full of fiber and minerals, making it a better, healthier choice. Whole fruits help you feel full. Children under 12 months - no juice. For children 12 months and older only 4oz. a day and with a meal or a snack. In between meals only water.

Certainly worth looking closer at what we and are children are consuming, for the benefit of our overall health.

For further information, see this [infographic](#).



NHSC LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM APPLICATIONS DUE

Submit Students to Service Loan Repayment Program applications by November 5

Students in their last year of dental, medical, or nursing school may be eligible to receive loan repayment assistance from the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) [Students to Service Loan Repayment Program](#). In return, loan recipients provide at least three years of service at an NHSC-approved site in a designated [Health Professional Shortage Area \(HPSA\)](#).

To find out what you need to know and what to submit with your application, read the [2021 Students to Service Loan Repayment Application and Program Guidance](#). There are specific requirements for medical students, nursing students, and dental students. Eligible students must [apply](#) by November 5, 2020 at 7:30 PM EST.

OOH SEEKS DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

The MDH Office of Oral Health is seeking a Deputy Director of Programs to provide administrative oversight for the department's daily operations and lead the development of short and long-term objectives related to community oral health issues. For further information and to apply, [click here](#).

CATHOLIC CHARITIES SEEKS DENTAL HYGIENIST

Must be fluent in English and Spanish

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington is seeking a bilingual (English/Spanish) dental hygienist to work in their dental clinic. [Click here](#) further information and to apply.

"The rates of soda consumption in our poorest communities cannot be explained by individual consumer preferences alone, but rather are linked to broader issues of access and affordability of healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods, and to the marketing efforts of soda companies themselves."

-Geoffrey Canada, President, Harlem Children's Zone

NEWS

[School Closures Cut a Critical Line to Dental Care for Poor Students](#)

[How Our Teeth Have Fared During COVID-19](#)

[With Silver Diamine Fluoride, Some Dentists are Obliterating Cavities With a Few Brushstrokes](#)

[New Dental Treatment Helps Fill Cavities and Insurance Gaps for Seniors](#)

[FQHCs Consider Adopting New Value-Based Care Model in Midst of Pandemic](#)

[Don't Delay Dental Visits During Pandemic](#)

[Pediatric Dentists Sound Alarm About Being Denied OR Access](#)

[Dentists See Surge of Oral Health Problems, and the Pandemic Is Likely to Blame](#)

[Not Doing This Simple Hygiene Task Boosts Your Cancer Risk, Study Says](#)

ARTICLES

[Why We Must Preserve School-Based Oral Care for Children](#)

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 January 1, 2020 through September 22, 2020:

- 5,116 claims were submitted
- 3,021 unique members filed valid claims
- 145 members met annual \$800 cap
- 502 unique providers submitted claims
- \$816,430.46 paid year-to-date

From program launch on June 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019:

- 8,006 claims were submitted
- 4,263 unique members filed valid claims
- 295 members met annual \$800 cap

[It's Back to School for Everyone: Promoting Children's Oral Health in a Pandemic](#)

[Oral Health Problems May Raise Cancer Risk](#)

[The Link Between Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia and the Mouth](#)

[Oral Health and Cancer: Collaborative Care and Patient Education](#)

[Oral Health Value-Based Care: The Federally Qualified Health Center \(FQHC\) Story](#)

[Lessons from the Pandemic: What COVID-19 Is Teaching Us](#)

[New CMS Data Highlights Impact of COVID-19 on Older Adults and Dually Eligible Consumers](#)

[U.S. Health in International Perspective: Shorter Lives, Poorer Health](#)

[Making America Healthy Again: Analyzing Trump's Take On The Social Determinants Of Health](#)

[Protecting and Expanding Access to Oral Health in 2020: Learning from State Trends in Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage](#)

[Medicare's Finances Have Gotten Much Worse in Recent Years, Foreshadowing Tough Choices for November's Winners](#)

[Medicaid and Early Childhood Services: Potential Fiscal Impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

WEBINARS

[What's Next in the Dental Care Rebound? A Look at Testing, a Vaccine, and Financial Relief Programs \(recorded\)](#)

[APHA Advancing Racial Equity Webinar Series \(recorded\)](#)

EVENTS

[AAC Fall Online Conference: Caries Management for Vulnerable Individuals, October 10, 2020](#)

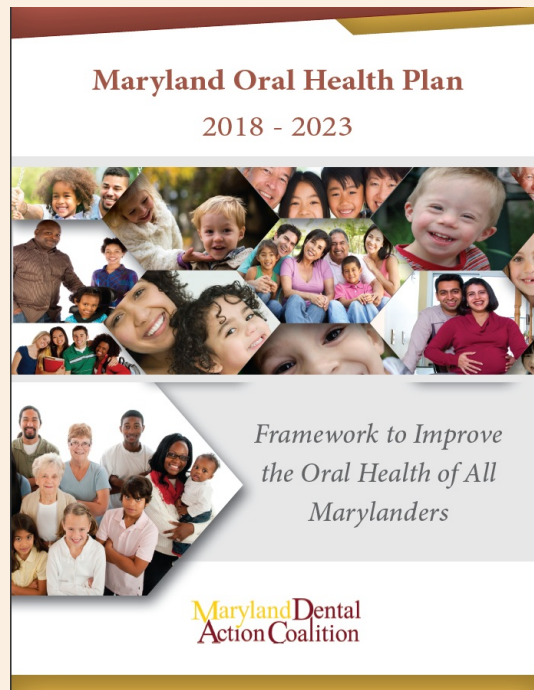
[Health Literacy in Action Conference, October 18-20, 2020](#)

[Maryland Rural Health Association Annual](#)

- 564 unique providers submitted claims
- \$1,358,714.53 paid

Note: 2019 numbers have been adjusted to reflect claims received after the first of the year for services performed in 2019.

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:

[Conference \(virtual\), October 19 - 20, 2020](#)

[OPEN National Meeting, October 20-23, 2020](#)

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

[NNOHA Annual Conference, October 25-28, 2020](#)



**11th Annual Ava Roberts
Advanced Pediatric Dentistry
Seminar
November 20, 2020**

- 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 collaboration between medical and dental disciplines and communities.

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](#)

[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](#)

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

Medicaid

[COVID-19 Exacerbates Existing Oral Health Care Access Barriers for Adult Medicaid Beneficiaries](#)

[Much Ado About Medicaid](#)

[Celebrating 55 Years of Medicaid at a Time When it's Needed Most](#)

[Inequities Amplified by COVID-19:](#)

COVID-19 RESOURCES

[Coronavirus Disease and Oral Health: Information for Parents About Promoting Good Oral Health at Home](#)

[Coronavirus Disease and Oral Health: Information for Parents About Visiting the Dental Office](#)

[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](#)

[Opportunities for Medicaid to Address Health Disparities](#)

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

LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

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](#)

[Brush Up on Oral Health: Healthy Bedtime Routine](#)

[Oral Health and School Readiness](#)

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

[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](#)

SUPPORT MDAC



Give a little to make a big impact! Your gifts, both large and small, will be used to promote good oral health behaviors, prevent oral disease and injury, and improve access to oral health care for all Marylanders, no matter where they live or what their special circumstances might be. Please help us continue this important work.

DONATE NOW!

MDAC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and contributions to support its activities are most appreciated. Thank you.



MDAC is pleased to welcome the following new member:

- Qian Harasta

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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