

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDAC PRESENTS MCKAY, MIDDLETON WITH ORAL HEALTH CHAMPION AWARD

(COLUMBIA, MD-June 21, 2018) – The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) honored Senator Thomas “Mac” Middleton (D-Charles County) and Delegate Mike McKay (R-Allegany and Washington Counties) with Oral Health Champion Awards at its recent *Oral Health and Overall Health: Opportunities for Continued Success in Maryland* statewide convening.

McKay and Middleton were instrumental in the passage of *Senate Bill 284 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults – Pilot Program*, legislation that will establish a pilot program to cover adult dental services in Medicaid. Middleton sponsored and championed the bill in the Senate. McKay’s leadership was responsible for the passage of the bill in the House.

Middleton and McKay both championed legislation in 2017 that authorized MDAC to study the cost of emergency department visits by adults with chronic dental conditions. The study found that 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.

In presenting the awards, MDAC Executive Director Mary Backley said, “This watershed event would not have been achieved without the unwavering commitment, dedication, and leadership of the two legislators we recognize today with our first Oral Health Champion Award: Delegate Mike McKay and Senator Thomas “Mac” Middleton. This past session, both legislators continued their years of steadfast resolve and determination to stay the course on Medicaid adult dental. They reached across the aisle to speak on behalf of all Maryland adults, not just their constituents. It is a remarkable example of bipartisanship that turned a formidable challenge into reality with unanimous passage of SB 284 in both the House and Senate.” Governor Larry Hogan signed the bill into law on May 15, 2018.

Many Maryland adults face serious financial obstacles to obtaining dental care. The pilot program is an important step forward in demonstrating that Medicaid adult dental coverage enables adults to establish a dental home, obtain preventive care, and avert costly dental conditions is a good investment in health outcomes and the fiscal health of Medicaid.

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About MDAC: The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC), the state's leading non-governmental oral health policy and advocacy organization, works to improve the oral health of all Marylanders through

increased oral health promotion, disease prevention, education, advocacy and access to oral health care. MDAC leads the development of the five-year Maryland Oral Health Plan and partners with individuals and organizations working to develop and implement initiatives to improve the oral health of all Marylanders.