

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2021 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 465  
Finance

(Senator West)

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**Maryland Medical Assistance Programs - Dental Providers and Dental Students -  
Reimbursement**

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This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), under the Medicaid program, to reimburse a dental provider for services rendered by a student of dentistry who is (1) engaged in a specified dental education program and (2) providing services under the supervision of a licensed dentist.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** As the bill essentially codifies what is permissible under current law, State finances are not materially affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Generally, an individual must be licensed by the State Board of Dental Examiners before the individual may practice dentistry on a human being in Maryland. This requirement does not apply to a student of dentistry while engaged in an education program at an approved school of dentistry.

With specified exceptions, an applicant for a dental license must hold a degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery, Doctor of Dental Medicine, or the equivalent, from a college or university that is (1) authorized by any state or any province of Canada to grant the degree

and (2) recognized by the board as requiring adequate preprofessional collegiate training and as maintaining an acceptable course of dental instruction.

Comprehensive dental coverage is mandatory for children enrolled in Medicaid. However, dental benefits for most Medicaid-eligible adults are optional. The Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program covers children younger than age 21, former foster care recipients younger than age 26, pregnant women age 21 and older, and adults enrolled in the Rare and Expensive Case Management program. For other Medicaid enrollees, dental coverage is only for emergency care. For enrollees in managed care organizations (MCOs), some limited dental benefits are offered on a voluntary basis by MCOs, but costs associated with those benefits are not reimbursed by Medicaid.

Chapter 621 of 2018 required MDH to establish a pilot adult dental program. In response, Medicaid proposed a limited benefit program (basic diagnostic and preventive coverage with limited restorative and extractive services) for adults ages 21 to 64 who are dually eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid (“dual-eligibles”). The program began in June 2019.

Under the Code of Maryland Regulations, all providers of Medicaid services (including dentists) must, to the extent required by law, be licensed and legally authorized to practice or deliver services in the state in which the service is provided. However, while a dental student is not eligible to enroll as a Medicaid provider, services performed by a dental student under the direct supervision of licensed dentist who is a Medicaid provider may be billed under the licensed dentist’s provider number.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 710 (Delegate Krebs) - Health and Government Operations.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 5, 2021  
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