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March 2, 2020

The Honorable Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass  
Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
District 13 - Howard County  
House Office Building, Room 241  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 921 Dentists – Saliva Lead Poisoning Screening Tests Scope of Practice and Requirements.

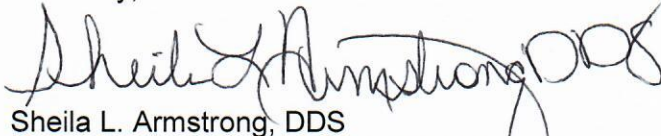
Dear Delegate Pendergrass,

Thank you for your commitment to the Health Government Operations Committee, to the citizens of Maryland and the dental professionals who serve them. As president of the National Dental Association (NDA), and practicing general dentist from the state of Michigan, I am all too familiar with the devastating effects of lead poisoning. I therefore walk in lockstep with the Maryland Dental Society and The Children's Oral Health Institute in their appeal to collect saliva and utilize to most contemporary measures detect lead in human beings.

Due to the level of training that dentists receive in the oral cavity, dentists should be the health professionals that take the lead in this screening effort for lead in children. It is recommended that children by the age of 1 should see a dentist for their first visit. Because we work in the oral cavity the collection of saliva is very simple for us to retrieve. This is also a more "pleasant" way of retrieving a sample as opposed to retrieval via blood samples and "needles".

I hope that the National Dental Association can count on your support to help in children being rescued from the devastating health danger of lead poisoning. Because of our commitment to oral health equity this screening process is another way that we can serve our communities and strive for better oral health and overall health.

Sincerely,



Sheila L. Armstrong, DDS  
National Dental Association, President 2020