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### Written Testimony In Support Of 2022 SB 150

#### Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage For Adults

Madam Chair and members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee. I would like to first thank you for the opportunity to present a brief but very important topic that is before your committee today. I have been practicing dentistry for over 37 years in the city of Baltimore. I am a second generation dentist, having the opportunity to practice with my father. I have always participated in the Medical Assistance Program in the State of Maryland since its inception. Children are our most vulnerable members of society. After that, I feel that our seniors and all others living below the poverty level are next. SB 150 would be a great start in getting adults over the age of 21 the coverage that they so desperately need. I am a member of the American Dental Association, The Maryland State Dental Association, National Dental Association and The Maryland Dental Society, to name a few. I am also on the Maryland Healthy Smiles Medicaid Advisory Board, The DentaQuest Adult Advisory Board and the Maryland Task Force on Oral Health.

So much of our population has been affected by the pandemic. Many have lost jobs in their field. It has caused those living on the edge, economically, to look for governmental assistance. This is where this bill will fill the void for so many. Every day I see adult patients that are covered by the present adult Medicaid program. They would like to save their teeth, but the coverage does not allow for those services i.e.: root canals or crowns. Therefore, their only alternative is to have the tooth extracted. I'm sure that my colleges will cover other aspects as to why this bill is so desperately needed. Maryland has been a national leader in providing its citizens with the medical care that it needs. The Maryland Legislature along with the Maryland State Dental Association and the Maryland Dental Society, among others, have led the way making sure that all citizens get the care that they need in our state.

The dental providers, like myself, participate in the Medical Assistance program, because they truly care for their patients. It is not for financial gain. The reimbursement schedule is about 40% of regular fees. This fee schedule has not been increased in over 12 years. We are losing providers every day, unfortunately.

I thank you for this opportunity to give my thoughts on this very important piece of legislation and ask for your support.

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