



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 6 – Maryland Medical Assistance – Adult Dental Coverage

Date: February 9, 2022

Position: Support

The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care strongly supports *House Bill 6 – Maryland Medical Assistance – Adult Dental Coverage*. The bill establishes adult dental coverage in Medicaid.

Adult dental coverage is critical for the health of families. We want all individuals in a home – parents, grandparents, and children – to be able to have the needed coverage to maintain their oral health. Oral health is an intrinsic part of overall health, and people with caries and periodontal disease are at higher risk for diabetes, hypertension, and stroke. These are all conditions which can devastate the wellbeing of families.

Children’s health outcomes are linked to their parents’ health outcomes, whether somatic or oral health. Research demonstrates that:

- Children are significantly less at risk for dental caries if parents have good oral health. A recent study demonstrated that the children’s rate of caries dropped by 5% when their parents had dental coverage for one year in the Medicaid programⁱ.
- Almost 20% of children in the U.S. have untreated caries – putting them at greater risk for dental pain, difficulties in eating healthy food, poor sleep and poor oral health as an adult. Children in Black and brown communities are more likely to have untreated caries.ⁱⁱ

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. Please vote to protect oral health and overall health of family members. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.

ⁱ The Association Between Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage And Children’s Oral Health. Lipton et al. Health Affairs 2021 40:11, 1731-1739

ⁱⁱ Assessing the Relationship Between Children’s Oral Health Status and that of Their Mothers. Dye et al. Journal of the American Dental Association. February 2011.