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February 9, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass  
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

Chesapeake Health Care enthusiastically supports House Bill 6, Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Dental Coverage for Adults.

Access to routine oral health care is a critical part of a person ' s overall health status and it is time for Maryland Medicaid to include dental coverage for all adult Medicaid beneficiaries. Maryland is only one of three states - Maryland , Alabama and Tennessee - that does not provide some level of adult dental coverage for adults enrolled in Medicaid.

Every year, thousands of adults enrolled in Medicaid seek "oral health care" from Maryland hospital emergency departments because they do not have coverage for and access to dental care. Emergency departments do not have the capability to treat underlying dental issues, and can only provide temporary, palliative care.

Not only does providing dental care for adults enrolled in Medicaid have important implications for improving a Medicaid enrollee ' s overall health status, but it also makes sound financial sense. Dollars currently spent to provide only temporary relief from dental pain can help fund a benefit structure that provides actual dental treatment. We at Chesapeake Health Care know from experience that routine, sustained dental care leads to better nutrition, avoidance of infection and improvement in patients' overall health status.

Maryland led the way in improving access to dental services for children - and now it is time for Maryland to join the ranks of 47 other states and provide dental coverage for all adults enrolled in Medicaid. Chesapeake Health Care urges a favorable on *House Bill 6* by the House Health and Government Operations Committee and enter a new era of comprehensive health care for all adults enrolled in Medicaid.

Sincerely,

Brian E. Holland, CEO