



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

House Health and Government Operations Committee
January 2022

HB 6: Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Dental Coverage for Adults Position: Support



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The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). As such, the DD Coalition supports HB 6.

A lack of comprehensive oral health services is of great concern to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Access to health care, including oral health care is a basic need.

WHAT does this legislation do?

This bill requires that the Maryland Medical Assistance Program provide comprehensive dental care for adults whose annual income is at or below 133 percent of the federal poverty level.

WHY is this legislation important?

- Many people with significant disabilities have Medicaid as their health insurance, which currently only covers basic cleaning two times per year and simple extractions.
- Many people with significant disabilities rely on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as their main or sole source of income.
- People with disabilities make up approximately 12 percent of the U.S. working-age population; however, they account for more than half of those living in long-term poverty.
- Cost and service coverage remain significant barriers for people with disabilities to access oral health care.

People with disabilities often have difficulty locating dentists and lack access to comprehensive oral health care due to the current Medicaid coverage structure. Additionally, dentists and dental hygienists frequently lack sufficient training to provide their services to people with significant support needs. The DD Coalition strongly advocates for and encourages the completion of this additional training. Expanding coverage to include comprehensive, but basic, oral health care services will assist in increasing both access and affordability.

The DD Coalition supports HB 6 because the required increase in comprehensive dental services for adults will begin to address a barrier to oral health care for people with disabilities.

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