

2024 ACNM SB 334 Senate Side.pdf

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Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Bill Number: SB 334 – Higher Education – Maryland Dent-Care Program - Eligibility

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) supports *Senate Bill 334 – Higher Education – Maryland Dent-Care Program – Eligibility*. The bill would make part-time dental hygienists and dentists eligible for the loan repayment program, called Dent-Care Program. The program supports dental providers who serve Medicaid participants.

ACNM has been a partner in expanding access to dental services for pregnant and postpartum individuals:

- In 2021, ACNM supported a budget initiative that expanded dental coverage for pregnant individuals through the postpartum period;
- In 2022, ACNM supported the establishment of dental coverage for all adult Medicaid participants through HB 6/SB 150 (Delegates Cullison and McKay/Senator Augustine and Guzzone); and
- In 2022, ACNM supported legislation to recognize that dental hygienists could provide preventive services in the practices of nurse-midwives and nurse practitioners through HB 219/SB 306 (then Delegate Kelly/Senator Lam).

Dental care is an essential but sometimes under-emphasized part of pregnancy care. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), 40% of women experience some form of periodontal disease during pregnancy. The risk is even higher in the Black community.¹

Loan repayment programs, like the Dent-Care Program, are an important strategy in building a diverse provider base that reflects the communities that they serve. To be successful, these programs need to be inclusive of a broad range of practitioners. House Bill 393 recognizes the economic and family realities faced by many practitioners who need to work part-time because of child care or other family obligations.

As nurse-midwives, we are particularly attuned to the challenges faced by women in navigating work and family obligations. We would note that 95% of dental hygiene students and 56% of dental students are women.^{ii,iii} According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 15% of women vs 3% of men work part-time in the age range of 35 to 44 years old.^{iv} This legislation supports more women being eligible for the Dent-Care Program.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2013/08/oral-health-care-during-pregnancy-and-through-the-lifespan>

ⁱⁱ https://www.adea.org/GoDental/Future_Dental_Hygienists/Dental_hygiene_by_the_numbers.aspx

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://adanews.ada.org/ada-news/2022/june/among-first-year-dental-students-women-see-highest-rate-of-enrollment/>

^{iv} <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2018/article/who-chooses-part-time-work-and-why.htm>

SB0334.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Jonathan Dayton

Position: FAV



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA)

To the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Chair: Senator Brian Feldman

February 13, 2024

Senate Bill 0334: Higher Education - Maryland Dent-Care Program - Eligibility

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA), is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 0334: Higher Education - Maryland Dent-Care Program - Eligibility.

Workforce shortages have plagued rural communities nationwide, including in Maryland. Expanding eligibility for the Maryland Dent-Care Program to include part-time dentists and dental hygienists who are practicing under a general or limited license; and authorizing the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the Maryland Higher Education Commission, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, to establish prorated loan repayment assistance for part-time dentists and dental hygienists will assist with the ongoing shortages.

14 of the 18 rural jurisdictions in Maryland experience a whole county dental professional shortage. More information can be found here:

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/9?state=MD>

*On behalf of the Maryland Rural Health Association,
Jonathan Dayton, MS, NREMT, CNE, Executive Director
jdayton@mdruralhealth.org*

2024 MCHS SB 334 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



Maryland Community Health System

Committee: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 334 – Higher Education - Maryland Dent-Care Program – Eligibility

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Position: Support

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports Senate Bill 334 – *Higher Education - Maryland Dent-Care Program - Eligibility*. This bill expands the eligibility for the Maryland Dent-Care Program to include part-time dentists and dental hygienists who are practicing under a general or limited license; and authorizing the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the Maryland Higher Education Commission, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, to establish prorated loan repayment assistance for part-time dentists and dental hygienists.

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) is a network of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) that serve underserved communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas across Maryland. FQHC dental clinics are major components of the dental safety net system, providing essential oral healthcare services to underserved populations. Building and expanding dental clinics and retaining dental providers within existing FQHCs is an important strategy to bridge the gap between medical and dental services offered by FQHCs.

Expanding loan repayment assistance to qualified part-time dentists and dental hygienists will help address the dental provider shortage. With the rising demand for dental services, it is crucial to have a sufficient number of dental hygienists to meet patient needs. By offering loan repayment assistance, dental practices can incentivize part-time dental hygienists to stay in the field and contribute to the overall oral health of the population.

MCHS supports this bill because it will help federally qualified health centers recruit and retain dental providers and meet the needs of our patients. We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

2024 MDAC SB 334 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



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Committee: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 334 - Higher Education - Maryland Dent-Care Program - Eligibility

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) strongly supports Senate Bill 334 - *Higher Education - Maryland Dent-Care Program - Eligibility*. MDAC is. This bill expands the eligibility for the Maryland Dent-Care Program to include part-time dentists and dental hygienists who are practicing under a general or limited license; and authorizing the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the Maryland Higher Education Commission, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, to establish prorated loan repayment assistance for part-time dentists and dental hygienists.

MDAC's mission to develop and maintain a statewide partnership of individuals and organizations committed to improving the health of all Marylanders through increased oral health promotion, disease prevention, education, advocacy and access to oral health care. We are deeply appreciative of the partnership of the Maryland General Assembly in advancing oral health equity. In 2022, Maryland took a significant step forward when the Maryland General Assembly enacted House Bill 6/SB 150 (Delegates Cullison and McKay/Senators Augustine and Guzzone) to establish the Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Program. As of January 2024, over 175,000 Marylanders have accessed dental services, some for the first time in years. This program will result in improvements in health outcomes for thousands of Marylanders.

Recognizing Part-Time Dentists and Dental Hygienists

MDAC has been collaborating with many partners in supporting the implementation of the Medicaid Adult Dental Program. Our community health center and local health department partners raised the issue of flexibility of the Maryland Dent-Care Program in our implementation work. The Program current requires participants to be full-time, which narrows the range of providers who can

Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders

participate. MDAC supports updating the eligibility criteria to include dentists and dental hygienists who are part-time as:

- Other loan repayment programs for health professionals are open to part-time practitioners for: 1) registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, certified nursing assistants, and certified medical technicians; and 2) physicians and physician assistants;ⁱ
- The National Health Service Corp and at least fourteen other states provide for part-time eligibility for dental providers (AZ, CA, CO, DE, MA, MT, NH, ND, OH, OR, PA, VT, WA, and WV);ⁱⁱ
- Part-time eligibility is essential for including women in the Maryland Dent-Care Program. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 15% of women vs 3% of men work part-time in the age range of 35 to 44 years oldⁱⁱⁱ. Women are more likely to work part-time because of child care and family obligations. In dental hygiene schools, 95% of students are women; and in dental school, 56% of dental students are women;^{iv,v} and

Supporting FQHCs and Local Health Departments in Retaining Limited License Dentists

When MDAC began researching this bill, we spoke with federally qualified health centers and local health departments. They flagged a need to support the recruitment and retention of limited license dentists, particularly in rural areas. Limited license dentists are internationally trained dentists. They work for two-years at an federally qualified health center or local health department as the last step in the process of obtaining a permanent, unrestricted license in Maryland. The first step of the process is taking the final two years of dental school in the U.S. or Canada. Our FQHC and local health department partner asked for help in retaining these dentists beyond their 2-year work requirement. If they were eligible for loan repayment on the U.S. portion of their education, it would be helpful. We believe this already allowed under Maryland law, but the bill would be helpful to clarify that point.

MDAC supports SB 334's provision related to limited license dentists to support our federally qualified health center and local health department colleagues. Maryland has 62 areas considered dental provider shortage areas, also known as health professional shortage areas. We need an estimated 348 more dentists to meet the oral health needs of Marylanders. In this time of severe health professional shortages, we should be looking for every opportunity to recruit and retain qualified practitioners.^{vi}

Conclusion

We ask for a favorable report on this bill. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Micheal Paddy at mpaddy@policypartners.net.

Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders

ⁱ <https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Pages/State-Loan-Repayment-Program.aspx>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.adea.org/advocacy/state/loan-forgiveness-programs.aspx>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2018/article/who-chooses-part-time-work-and-why.htm>

^{iv} https://www.adea.org/GoDental/Future_Dental_Hygienists/Dental_hygiene_by_the_numbers.aspx

^v <https://adanews.ada.org/ada-news/2022/june/among-first-year-dental-students-women-see-highest-rate-of-enrollment/>

^{vi} <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/dental-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

2024 MASBHC SB 334 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Bill Number: SB 334 – Higher Education – Maryland Dent-Care Program - Eligibility

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Centers (MASBHC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 334 – Higher Education – Maryland Dent-Care Program – Eligibility*. The bill would provide more flexibility for the Maryland Dent-Care Program. This loan repayment program is currently only available to full-time dentists and dental hygienists. The bill would allow for part-time dentists and dental hygienists to apply as well.

There are almost 90 school-based health centers across Maryland providing primary care and behavioral health care to underserved student communities. About one-third of school-based health centers provide dental services. More school-based health centers want to provide dental care, but face many barriers including dental provider shortages. This legislation would be helpful to recruitment and retention efforts, as school-based health centers are likely to only need dental providers on a part-time basis. These dentists and dental hygienists are not currently eligible for the Maryland Dent-Care Program, unless they work full-time across multiple school-based health centers.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

2024 Wise Women SB 334 Senate Side (3).pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



WISE

Women · Indivisible · Strong · Effective¹

Feb 11, 2024

Dear Members of the Health and Government Operations and the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committees,

I am writing on behalf of Maryland WISE women to ask you for favorable consideration of Higher Education - Maryland Dent-Care Program - Eligibility, SB0334/HB0393. This bill is simple - it enlarges the population of dental professionals that have access to the current program. As the program stands now, it leaves out part-time dental office professionals.

As a group of primarily professional women advocates, WISE is concerned that the current program leaves professional women out. Out of all the students currently enrolled in accredited dental hygiene programs, 94.7 percent are women.² We also know that women are nearly twice as likely as men to work part-time.³ Therefore, by excluding part-time professionals, you are denying primarily women an important opportunity.

It is our understanding that the bill requires no additional funding, and that any loan repayment to a part-time dentist/dental hygienist would be pro-rated accordingly. This bill would get the existing pool of funding to a more diverse pool of people.

Thank you in advance for a favorable vote on SB0334/HB0393.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michelle Koul

Maryland WISE Women

marylandwisewomen@gmail.com

[facebook.com/WomenIndivisibleStrongEffective](https://www.facebook.com/WomenIndivisibleStrongEffective)

¹ WISE is a local organization of over 700 women, an information platform for women of diverse views that have come together to promote values and rights that foster inclusivity, fairness and safety in our Anne Arundel County, MD communities. We continue to use our collective energy to act and advocate on a range of issues, particularly at the local level, and we support elected officials who are consistent with our mission, while holding them accountable.

² 2018-19 ADA Survey of Allied Dental Education

³ <https://statusofwomendata.org/earnings-and-the-gender-wage-gap/womens-labor-force-participation/#:~:text=Part%2Dime%20Work,with%2015.8%20percent%3B%20Table%20B2>.

Twitter: @WISE_SP

Instagram: wise_maryland

HB 393 & SB 334.pdf

Uploaded by: Charles Doring

Position: UNF



CHARLES A. DORING, D.D.S., F.A.G.D.
CLEMENTINA PEREZ-WEST, D.D.S.
ROBERT B. TILKIN, D.D.S., M.S., F.A.G.D.

Testimony Opposing HB 393 / SB 334

Higher Education- Maryland Dent-Care Program Eligibility

Submitted by Charles A. Doring DDS

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my reasonings why I have concerns about the unfavorable changes HB 393 /SB 334 would cause to an already woefully underfunded Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP). I am a general dentist in Rockville, MD and a Maryland Healthy Smiles provider. Currently, University of Maryland School of Dentistry (UMSOD) 2023-24 Basic Tuition is \$24,330/semester for Maryland Residents and \$45,267/semester for non-residents. Over the course of 4 years dental school curriculum (not including undergraduate college tuition and other fees), tuition debt alone could be as high as \$194,640 for instate and \$362,136 non-resident. This is the highest possible tuition debt of all the University of Maryland Baltimore professional programs. Just to compare, School of Medicine Tuition over 4 years is \$158,920 in state and \$278,476 non-resident.

According to the American Dental Education Association (ADEA), in 2022 the average graduating dental student debt was \$293,900 and 83% of dental students graduated with educational debt in 2022. The report goes in to state that "Educational debt factors into dentists' career decisions after graduation. New dentists can be deterred from pursuing their desired career path when burdened with substantial debt". This substantial debt influences young dentist practice location and if that are able to participate in the Maryland Healthy Smiles (Dental Medicaid) program or not due to very low reimbursement fees. The Dent-Care LARP program is a great way of helping young dental professional overcome these obstacles but unfortunately the program has not been funded to the extent required in last years Oral Health Care Task Care Bill (2023 HB 290) signed into law by Governor Moore on May 3, 2023.

I have some real concerns about the changes to existing the existing law that are being proposed in this bill are:

- 1) The Maryland Department of Education has not fully funded the MD Dent-Care program as required by legislation passed last year as part of the Oral Health Task Force legislation. The Maryland Office of Oral Health under the direction of Dr. Debony Hughes has requested funding 8 dentists and 5 hygienists for this year but the Department has only funded for 2 & 1/2 positions. Current law requires participants to be "employed full time". To dilute the pool to "part timers" further means less funds would be available to those who are fully engaged in the program.
- 2) The intent of the program is to have providers select Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) to improve access to dental care to vulnerable individuals. Dentist and Denal Hygienists have set up roots in a HPSA community and plan to stay to provide important care in a shortage area. At least 30% of the dental care treatment performed must be to Maryland Healthy Smiles (Medicaid) patients. Those who

work "part time" in a HPSA location could also be working in a non-HPSA location and less likely to stay to provide care in areas that need care the most. I understand the need for some individuals who may have other commitments and need to work part time but the program currently cannot accommodate those who fully commit to the program.

3) The addition of "limited license" means individuals who currently are unable to qualify for a dental license. This means individuals who may not have the same level of training as Maryland licensed dentists and dental hygienists. There are pathways for internationally trained dentists to earn a general license in Maryland and we are working on another bill to make it easier pathway for those who were internationally trained and passed the required exams (2024 SB 799 / HB 786) to obtain a general licence. To assume that the graduation requirements outside of the US and Canada are equivalent to ours is a leap of faith that potentially puts patients at risk.

For these reasons, I feel SB 334 / HB 393 give me concerns that passage will diminish the original goal of the Dent-Care program but do ask for your consideration for full funding of the existing program. For these reasons, I ask that SB 334 & HB 393 be given an unfavorable report.

Charles G. Davy MD

MSDA Opposition to SB 334 - Dent-Care Program.pdf

Uploaded by: Daniel Doherty

Position: UNF



The Maryland State Dental Association Opposes SB 334 – Higher Education – Maryland Dent-Care Program-Eligibility

Submitted by Daniel T. Doherty, Jr. on Behalf of the Maryland State Dental Association

The Maryland Dent-Care Program was established and has operated with a 2-fold purpose. First, to provide financial assistance to dentists who are practicing following dental school and who are saddled with tremendous debt from student loans; and second, to link this financial assistance to a 3-year obligation whereby the dentist agrees that at least 30% of the patients treated in a private practice or clinical setting will be Maryland Medical Assistance Program recipients. The intent of the Program is to encourage more dentists and dental hygienists to select Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) to establish their practice, and staying in the area to provide dental care to the Dental Medicaid population. Traditionally, the grant recipients have been graduates of the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, and graduates of other dental schools who are, or intend to become, Maryland based dental providers. The program requires that the recipients continue to be employed for the 3 years as **full-timed dentists**.

In 2023 the General Assembly passed HB 290 which among other provisions increased the amount of the grants to a dentist to \$50,000 per year for up to 3 years. It also expanded the program to include dental hygienists authorizing grants of not more than \$10,000 for 2 years. The intent was to provide grants in fiscal year 2025 for 8 dentists and 5 dental hygienists at a budget cost of \$450,000. That money has not been appropriated in the 2024-2025 Budget, and the Department has been able to fund only 2.5 positions.

SB 334 proposes to add part-time dentists as eligible recipients of Maryland Dent-Care Grants. The MSDA strongly opposes these changes because part-time dentists are far less likely to stay in the HPSA in which they have been practicing for 3 years, undermining the goal of these recipients making the HPSA their “home” and continuing to serve the Dental Medicaid population. Including part-time dentists will further dilute the meager budgetary appropriation for this program, and reduce the probability of dentists committing their practices to this population.

SB 334 would also include limited licensees as eligible recipients of these grants. This permits the awarding of grants to internationally trained dentists whose practices are restricted because they are unable to qualify for a general dental license. These individuals generally do not have the same level of training as the applicants who have a general license to practice dentistry. There are pathways for internationally trained dentists to become eligible for a general license. The program should not include foreign trained dentists whose dental school training was not in the United States or Canada, who, if they have student loans, the loans are not obligations owed to American financial lenders or institutions. To include them, the MSDA contends, would be an ill-advised public policy.

For these reasons the Maryland State Dental Association urges that SB 334 receive an unfavorable report.

**Submitted February 14, 2024 by:
Daniel T. Doherty, Jr.**

SENATE BILL 334 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Kirsten Heavener

Position: UNF

Chair of the Senate Committee

SENATE BILL 334

February 14, 2024 – 1PM

OPPOSED (UNF)

Kirsten Heavener

839 Windsor Road

Cumberland, MD 21502

I am testifying in opposition to SB 334.

I was a recipient of the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP) from 2016-2018 while I worked full-time at Dr. Diane D. Romaine and Associates in Frostburg, MD. I continue to participate in the Maryland Healthy Smiles program as a full-time Merit position Dentist at the Allegany County Health Department in Cumberland, MD. The program was an immense help for a new dentist who had recently graduated from University of Maryland Dental School (May 2014) and completed a 1-year GPR in York, PA (2014-2015) - and now had loans to start paying.

I chose to work in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA), though this choice was not an easy one. When I made the decision to move to Western Maryland, I was newly married and my husband had a job at a prominent Baltimore law firm. There were 2 factors that heavily influenced my decision.

- 1- I'm originally from Western Maryland and was excited to move back to help in my hometown community (which is classified as an HPSA).
- 2- My employer expressed to me that I would have the opportunity to apply and possibly be awarded with the LARP program. This was a huge incentive knowing that I would need to start paying on my student loans from dental school.

In my dental school class alone, there were six students from Western Maryland. Three of those classmates have not returned home to work. Of the other three, one returned home for 1 year following graduation but then moved on to Pittsburgh. The two of us who remain represent only one-third of what the potential work force could have become in the area from among the Class of 2014 Western Maryland residents. Of the remaining approximately 120 members of my class (not from my area) none of them moved to Western Maryland. We need incentives to draw

people to work in an HPSA. Being a local of the area clearly isn't enough. And if you're not a native, then living in an HPSA can be a hard-sell.

The incentive that helped sway my decision was that I could help a community that was in need while also being rewarded for my work. Though the funds were an immense help (I ended up receiving approximately \$70,000 over the 3 years), an increase in the funding would absolutely be beneficial to young dentists that are trying to help out in shortage areas. I'm about to celebrate 10 years since my graduation and I still have over \$100,000 in dental school debt (and that's with in-state tuition). Without the MDC-LARP, I would owe almost double what I currently owe.

I made that choice to invest in an HPSA – fulltime. Working fulltime in this community allowed me to put down roots and determine that I want to continue to give back to this area long after my LARP awarded ended. I would assume someone working part-time may not feel that same sense of community. If someone is willing to devote themselves to a HPSA fulltime, I feel that is a decision worth rewarding.

I'm so very grateful for the program and cannot state enough the good that it does for dentists, as well as for Health Professional Shortage Areas. The only language that needs modifying in the current guidelines would be the award's fiscal amount.

I oppose the proposed changes of allowing part-time dentists to be eligible for the Dent-Care Program. I also believe that the funding should be increased for those eligible by the traditional Dent-Care Program guidelines.

Dr. Kirsten Heavener, DDS, FAGD

SB334.pdf

Uploaded by: Neel S Satpute

Position: UNF

SB 334

opposed (UNF)

As a former recipient of MDLARP and a current provider of Healthy Smiles patients I oppose SB 334, and at the same time advocate for full funding of the Dent-Care program. My concern is that if funding is split between part-time, limited-license, and full-time dentists, there will be less funds for those full-time dentists that are fully engaged in the program. The full-time recipients, like myself, are more likely to select Health Professional Shortage Areas to practice in and continue to provide care to those individuals in need. Additionally, limited-license individuals may not have the same level of training as a US/Canadian trained dentist, thus potentially putting patients at risk. Once again, I oppose SB 334 / HB 393 to improve access to care that is provided by full-time practitioners.

Thank you,

Neel S. Satpute, D.D.S.
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