



10015 Old Columbia Road, Suite B-215  
Columbia, Maryland 21046  
www.mdac.us

**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Bill:** House Bill 103 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Dental Services - Coverage and Rate Study

**Hearing Date:** February 13, 2024

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) supports *House Bill 103 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Services – Coverage and Rate Study*. The bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to study the feasibility of covering full and partial dentures in the Medicaid program.

This legislation would be a strong step in continuing to advance oral health in Maryland. MDAC is appreciative of the strong partnership of the Maryland General Assembly and the Maryland Department of Health in prioritizing oral health care for all Marylanders. In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly enacted *HB 6/SB 150 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults (Delegates Cullison and McKay/Senators Augustine and Guzzone)*. The Program has already changed the lives of many Marylanders with 176,000 people being served in the first year. Medicaid dental coverage is improving the health outcomes of individual Marylanders as well as the population health status of Maryland. Regular dental care reduces the impact and cost of chronic conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, and reduces avoidable emergency department visits.

MDAC supports examining how Medicaid coverage could be extended to cover dentures. Tooth loss (edentulism) can have a severe negative impact on an individual’s somatic and behavioral health. Edentulism is associated with higher rates of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, arthritis, cardiovascular disease, cancer and asthma.<sup>i</sup>

MDAC requests a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fdata.2022.932618/full>

***Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders***