

## **HB 771\_Del Harrison\_FAV(1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Delegate Andrea Harrison

Position: FAV

ANDREA FLETCHER HARRISON  
*Legislative District 24*  
Prince George's County

Economic Matters Committee

*Subcommittees*

Alcoholic Beverages

Banking, Consumer Protection,  
and Commercial Law

Worker's Compensation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 27, 2025

Student Health – Program for Student Dental Health -Established  
House Bill 771

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice-chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. I am Delegate Andrea Harrison and I'm here to present House Bill 771, Student Health – Program for Student Dental Health. The original purpose of this bill was for the Department of Health to create a regulation for a certificate of dental health that would be used by public schools, create a standard form to be used by health care practitioners, parents, and schools, provide information for parents and guardians on how to find insurance to cover dental health care, and a listing of providers. The amended bill before you requires the Maryland Department of Health to establish a program for Student Dental Health.

Children's oral health is a key public health priority. Dental screenings, just like physicals, ensure that students are prepared for school without any preventable condition impairing their abilities to learn and succeed. This program would provide parents and students with information for recommended periodic examinations, provide information on how to find dental health care coverage and emphasize the importance of dental health to a child's overall well-being.

In 2017, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Council on Clinical Affairs revised a 2003 policy to state that "an oral health examination prior to matriculation into school may improve school readiness by providing a timely opportunity for prevention, diagnosis, and

treatment of oral conditions.” According to the AAPD, tooth decay or cavities, known as caries, are the most common chronic disease of childhood in the United States. Here are some of the statistics:

- Early childhood caries affect 23% of children 2 – 5 years of age
- By the ages 6 – 8, caries increases to 56%
- In 33% of low income children, the number of caries increases to 75%

In various other studies conducted regarding school attendance and performance due to oral health, the following issues were identified:

- 1) 36% of students with access to oral care missed two or more days due to dental problems as compared to 73% of children who missed the same number of days who could not afford dental care.
- 2) The US Dept. of Health and Human Services estimates that 51 million school hours are missed each year because of dental problems, and
- 3) Children with poor oral health and general health were 2.3 times more likely to have poor academic performance.

The Maryland Department of Health conducted an oral health survey of Maryland school children from 2015-2016. Here are some of its key findings:

- Third-grade students had significantly higher dental caries history compared to kindergarten children (41.3% vs 30.2%)
- The prevalence of dental caries in third-grade students slightly improved from 2012 to 2016, whereas, the prevalence of dental caries in kindergarten students increased by 22% during the same period
- Maryland’s Eastern Shore had the highest percentage of dental caries (44.4%), and Western Maryland had the lowest (28.8%)
- Children in schools with high proportions of free/reduced meals have a higher lifetime caries experience (45.4%)

The American Association of Pediatric Dentists stated in their 2019 report The State of Little Teeth, “tooth decay compromises the health, development, and quality of life of children, affecting such factors as eating, sleeping, self-esteem, speech development and school performance”. Caries make children more vulnerable to various infections in other parts of their body, such as the ears, sinuses, and the brain, and could have a harmful long-term impact not only on their oral health, but also on their overall health.

Even commonplace drugs such as acetaminophen can harm children’s health and endanger their lives. Over-the-counter brand name medicines that contain acetaminophen include Tylenol, PediaCare and Triaminic. In the U.S., acetaminophen toxicity is the most frequent cause of acute hepatic failure and is the second most frequent cause of liver failure requiring transplantation.

The pain from tooth decay may hinder many young children from speaking, playing, going to school, or paying attention in class. Discolored, damaged or missing teeth may hurt children’s self-esteem and social development by making them afraid to smile or subjecting them to teasing and social ostracism.

Children with poor oral health are more likely to miss school and are less likely to do all required homework. In the U.S., over 34 million school hours are lost each year due to dental problems. Children with poor oral health are nearly three times more likely to miss school because of dental pain and more likely to have lower school performance. Given that poor and minority children are especially subject to untreated tooth decay, these social and quality-of-life repercussions pose yet another barrier to achieving success in life.

This bill allows the State of Maryland to continue the process of encouraging school-aged children to receive and maintain better oral health, cut down on absenteeism in our school systems, and give our children a healthy start for academic success due to a baseline or

initial screening. We have a responsibility to help our children get the best start possible in school. It is my opinion that House Bill 771 provides the tools necessary to encourage parents to seek dental screenings for their children. I respectfully ask you to give a favorable report on this important bill for the health of our children.

# **JordanVirdenWrittenTestimonyHB0771FAVORABLE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jordan Virden

Position: FAV

March 25, 2025

RE: HB771 (Harrison) Student Health – Program for Student Dental Health –  
Established – FAVORABLE

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jordan Virden, I am a board-certified pediatric dentist and current President of the Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. I strongly support HB 0771, that would ensure children in Maryland have a dental exam prior to starting school. Dental decay is the number one chronic condition of childhood and I see children daily in my practice with dental pain and infection. Dental decay is largely preventable, and we know that children seen earlier and on a regular basis are more likely to have better oral health outcomes. Currently dental exams prior to starting school are only required in four counties in Maryland. With HB 0771, children will not be prevented from going to school, but this would help parents and caregivers understand how important oral health is to a child's overall health and wellbeing.

This legislation is also consistent with our American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) *Policy on School Entrance Oral Health Examinations* which states:

"The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) encourages policy makers, public health and education officials, and medical and dental communities to recognize that unmet oral health needs can impact a child's ability to learn. An oral health examination prior to matriculation into school may improve school readiness by providing a timely opportunity for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of oral conditions."

As a board certified pediatric dentist and someone who cares deeply about the health and well-being of the children of Maryland I urge the Maryland General Assembly to adopt this important and much needed legislation.

Warmly,

Jordan Virden, DDS  
Pediatric Dentist, Smiles4Children  
Board Certified Pediatric Dentist, American Board of Pediatric Dentistry  
President, Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

# **Kristen Evans written testimony HB 771.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kristen Evans

Position: FAV



Kristen Evans, DMD

Diplomate American Board Pediatric Dentistry

Porter Dental

4173 Patterson Ave

Baltimore, MD 21215

March 27, 2025

RE: HB771 – (Harrison) – Student Health – Program for Student Dental Health – Established -  
**FAVORABLE**

My name is Dr. Kristen Evans. I am a board-certified pediatric dentist who strongly supports Bill HB771. Nationwide 51 million hours of school are lost due to dental illness. This bill will help prevent and reduce childhood dental decay through early intervention and education.

Dental decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood, affecting one in five children under the age of five. Children in poverty are twice as likely to suffer from tooth decay, and twice as likely not to receive proper dental care. When left untreated, severe cases can result in hospitalizations and general anesthesia, with treatment costs ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 per child. I perform over 75 of such cases, full-mouth dental restorative procedures under general anesthesia each month in hospitals and surgical centers across the state of Maryland. There is no district unaffected by childhood decay in our state!

A national survey by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) found that 75% of parents do not take their child to the dentist by the recommended first birthday, often due to a lack of awareness. By implementing dental screenings before enrollment in public kindergarten, we can educate parents, prevent decay, and reduce the need for costly and traumatic emergency treatments.

We urge Maryland legislators to pass HB 771 and take a critical step toward improving children's oral health. Early screenings and education can spare thousands of children from unnecessary pain, infections, and hospitalizations while saving families and the healthcare system from avoidable financial burdens. I strongly recommend a standardized dental form be implemented to encourage adequate care as well as a link to providers who accept Healthy Smiles Medicaid. We do not want another child to be the next Deamonte Driver whose untimely death resulted from a lack of access to dental care!

Join me in supporting HB 771 to ensure a healthier future for Maryland's children because baby teeth matter!

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K E', is positioned above the printed name.

Kristen Evans, DMD

# **HB0771 Student Health - Program for Student Dental**

Uploaded by: Olivia Chin

Position: FAV

# **HB0771 Student Health - Program for Student Dental Health - Established**

*Thursday, March 27, 2025*

EDUCATION, ENERGY, & THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

## **SUPPORT**

Our names are Julien Halleman, Noah Gordon, Olivia Chin, and Dhru Nahan, and we are students of Anne Arundel County and executive team members of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). We are writing **in support of HB0771 Student Health - Program for Student Dental Health**. The passing of this bill would require the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to create a program that includes the description general dental health standards as well as information on how to find insurance that covers dental care, a list of pediatric dentists, and the importance of maintaining good dental hygiene in student handbooks and on the schools local website. **The implementation of this bill would instill lifelong healthy dental habits in young children. Additionally, it could also motivate children to be more confident in their smiles, promoting student empowerment.**

The childhood and adolescence years are one of the most impressionable years of a child's life, with the median age of 12 being the most impressionable by their [parent's influence](#), making these years crucial to instilling good habits. While children can be most directly affected and influenced by their parents, schools play an important part as well; after all, most children spend a quarter to a third of their day there. By exposing proper dental hygiene habits to children via websites and school campaigns, students can have access to proper information about dental care that is viable, as opposed to them obtaining unreliable dental information on the internet. With this information, healthy habits can be formed that could steer the child away from dental issues and diseases as they continue to grow into adulthood. Additionally, the knowledge of one healthy habit could trigger the desire for healthier choices in other areas of life.

Furthermore, reliable dental information wouldn't just benefit the child physically, but also socially. When first meeting someone, [the smile is the first thing we see](#). Kids who have improper dental hygiene habits may also consequently be insecure about the way their teeth or smile looks, inhibiting the child from making new social connections at school or settings with unfamiliar people.

In conclusion, the passing of HB0771 would (1) instill healthy dental habits for kids at a young age, (2) influence children to be more health-conscious overall, and (3) could push kids to make new connections by putting their best smile forward.

The CRASC Legislative Department refers back to the following relevant clauses of the CRASC Platform:

- *CRASC Supports...* Implementation and availability of health services to students for confidential (Plank 4, Clause A)
- *CRASC Supports...* Comprehensive and quality health education for all genders and sexualities. (Plank 4, Clause L)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on HB0771.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julien Halleman, Secretary of Legislation, [julienh123@icloud.com](mailto:julienh123@icloud.com)

Noah Gordon, Legislative Liaison, [noah.gordonn08@gmail.com](mailto:noah.gordonn08@gmail.com)

Olivia Chin, Legislative Liaison, [gooliviachin@gmail.com](mailto:gooliviachin@gmail.com)

Dhru Nahan, Legislative Liaison, [dhrunaran@gmail.com](mailto:dhrunaran@gmail.com)



## **HB771.pdf**

Uploaded by: SHARI KOHN

Position: FAV

To: Mister Chairman and the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

HB771 will recommend that all children receive a dental evaluation before starting school in the state of Maryland. It is currently required in ONLY 4 jurisdictions in the state.

Since dental caries (cavities) is the most common disease of childhood, we must do our part to help children get proper treatment and prevention. Half of all children in elementary school have cavities. These cavities can often cause pain, infection and may result in difficulty chewing and eating. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, 51 million of hours of school are lost because of these dental problems.

As a Pediatric Dentist, I must advocate for children's dental health. I have seen, firsthand, the problems untreated decay can cause. Pediatric Dentists promote evidence-based policies and best practices. The evidence clearly supports early childhood dental treatment will last a lifetime.

While the current recommendation for the first dental visit is AGE 1, this recommendation of a visit when starting school, through the school system, will help parents understand the importance of dental health. When children begin school, they are currently required to have a medical evaluation. It should also be required for them to have a dental evaluation. The mouth is the first part of overall health.

Please support this bill HB771. It is the first step in making sure our youngest patients are taken care of and will help them avoid painful problems. It is not their fault that their parents often do not know any better.

Thank you for your time,

Dr. Shari Kohn

Maryland Public Policy Advocate for the Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

Fellow, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

Fellow, American College of Dentists

Fellow, International College of Dentists

Member, Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners

Member, Board of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Foundation

Member, Board of the Maryland State Dental Association Foundation

Clinical Instructor, University of Maryland School of Dentistry – Department of Pediatric Dentistry

# **HB 771 - EEE - Dental Board - LOSAA.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: FWA



*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Ryan Moran, DrPH, MHSA, Acting Secretary*

Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners  
Spring Grove Hospital Center  
Benjamin Rush Bldg.  
55 Wade Ave/Tulip Drive  
Catonsville, MD 21228

March 27, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman  
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

Re: House Bill 771 – Student Health – Program for Student Dental Health – Establishment – Letter of Support as Amended

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners respectfully submits this letter of support as amended for House Bill 771 – Student Health – Program for Student Dental Health – Establishment. Although the bill was amended in the House to delete the requirement that beginning in the 2027-2028 school year each student enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in the State submit to the school a certificate of dental health, the Board believes that the bill will still have significant benefit for Maryland children.

The Department of Health is required to establish a program for student dental health which must include the following: standards for recommended periodic dental examinations of students; information for students and parents on how to find insurance that will cover dental care; lists of pediatric dentists located in different regions of the State; and the importance of dental health to a student's overall health and well-being.

In addition, the bill as amended requires the Department of Health to support and facilitate each county board of education in publishing information on student dental health that is created by the Program for Student Dental Health and in student handbooks. The bill mandates that the Department of Health adopt regulations to carry out the bill.

Maintaining good oral health for children is critical. Cavities are the most common chronic diseases among children, and untreated dental problems can lead to pain, infection, worsening of the



dentition, difficulty eating and sleeping, other health conditions, social and emotional issues, and challenges in school. Early detection is important. Preventive dental visits, such as check-ups and dental cleanings, are essential to maintain oral health and address dental problems before they become more serious. It is hoped that the bill will help to create a dental home for continuing dental treatment for children, especially the most vulnerable.

For the foregoing reasons, the Dental Board requests that HB 771 as amended receive a favorable report.

I hope that this information is helpful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at 202-997-2606 or [chiyo.alie@maryland.gov](mailto:chiyo.alie@maryland.gov).

The opinion of the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners expressed in this letter of support as amended position paper does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the administration.

Sincerely,  
*Chiyo Alie, D.D.S.*  
Chiyo Alie, D.D.S.  
Board President

# **HB0771- State Board- LOI- Crossover.pdf**

Uploaded by: Madeline Houck

Position: INFO

TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

BILL: House Bill (HB) 771 – Student Health – Program for Student Dental Health – Established

DATE: March 25, 2025

POSITION: Information

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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides this information regarding **House Bill (HB) 771 – Student Health – Program for Student Dental Health – Established**.

### **HB 771 Summary**

HB 771 as amended directs MSDE to “support and facilitate” the publication of information on student dental health that results from a program for student dental health that will be created by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) by HB 771.

### **MSDE Information**

Education Article § 7–411.1 and 7-4.11.2 currently direct MSDE to support local education agencies (LEAs) in incorporating age-appropriate lessons on a range of topics, including oral disease prevention and dental health. Implementation of the statute and all health curriculum requirements is a responsibility of each local board of education. MSDE establishes standards to fulfill the requirements of the law. COMAR 13A.04.18 requires the local superintendent to certify compliance with the Health Education State Curriculum, which includes oral health.

The terms “support and facilitate” in HB 771 are broad. Maryland LEAs maintain websites, student and family handbooks and other publications to convey information to the public and comply with statutory and regulatory requirements to post information. Assistance from MSDE is not needed for these functions. MSDE can convey information to LEA Directors of Student Support and Directors of School Health Services to increase awareness of the program for student dental health that will be created by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) by HB 771. MSDE can also share information from MDH and MSDE with the communications offices of LEAs to facilitate publication on websites, and in student handbooks and other documents.

MSDE respectfully requests consideration of these comments as HB 771 is discussed and deliberated.

For further information, please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne at 410-767-0504, or [Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov](mailto:Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov)