



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

March 10, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: House Bill (HB) 1143 – Dental Services – Dental Hygienists in Schools and School-Based Health Centers and the Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children’s Oral Health Through School-Based Programs – Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of information regarding House Bill (HB) 1143 – Dental Services – Dental Hygienists in Schools and School-Based Health Centers and the Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children’s Oral Health Through School-Based Programs. HB 1143 establishes the Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children’s Oral Health (the Collaborative) to study and make recommendations to enhance school-based dental programs.

The Department would like to provide information about the current status of oral health care in Maryland’s School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs). The Standards for SBHCs in the Maryland School-Based Health Center Program outline the minimum requirements for SBHCs seeking and maintaining approval from the Department’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau.<sup>1</sup> Oral health is classified as a specialized or expanded service, which *may* be offered based on the needs of the school, feasibility, and the expertise of the care team. Currently, fewer than 30% of Maryland’s 89 approved SBHCs offer this expanded service. There is no specific requirement in the Standards regarding whether the staff providing these services should be a dentist or a dental hygienist.

The Department supports the Collaborative’s goal of studying and recommending ways to improve the oral health of children in Maryland through school-based dental programs. However, the Department must also acknowledge the anticipated fiscal and operational impact of participating in, and providing staff for, the Collaborative. The Department requires additional personnel to oversee the development and management of the Collaborative and to ensure the overall successful implementation of this bill. This would include implementing, coordinating, staffing, and managing the Collaborative activities; providing background research and data to

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<sup>1</sup> Standards for School-Based Health Centers in the Maryland School-Based Health Center Program, January 2025, <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/mch/MD-HBHC-Program/Documents/Maryland%20HBHC%20Program%20Standards%202025.pdf>

the Collaborative; and managing the development and submission of the required reports. The responsibilities outlined in the bill cannot be accommodated with the Department's current staffing levels.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan B. Moran". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ryan Moran, Dr. PH  
Acting Secretary