

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study

Hearing Date: April 1, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Centers (MASBHC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study*. 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.

In addition, we support the study to examine if dental carriers are using an online system for credentialing. School-based health centers have limited administrative resources. The study would help provide information on whether online credentialing is an option with dental carriers.

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.