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March 3, 2020

To: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Governmental Operations Committee

From: Patricia F. O'Connor, Health Education and Advocacy Unit (HEAU)

Re: House Bill 947 (Health Occupations- Violations of the Maryland Dentistry Act- Penalties and Cease and Desist Orders): **SUPPORT**

The HEAU submits the following written testimony in support of House Bill 947. The bill codifies the authority of the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (the Board) to issue cease and desist orders against persons practicing dentistry without a license or violating laws that regulate dental appliances and dental laboratory work. Existing criminal penalties are increased under the bill, and the Board is newly authorized to impose a civil fine of up to \$50,000 upon a person who practices dentistry without a license, or who aids or abets a person practicing dentistry without a license.

The HEAU receives complaints from consumers who have suffered serious personal and economic injury arising out of the unauthorized practice of dentistry and violations of the laws that regulate dental appliances and dental laboratory work. While the wrongful conduct is also subject to the enforcement authority of the Consumer Protection Division, the Board has the subject matter expertise to address the unauthorized practice of dentistry and illegal dental appliance fabrication and sales more efficiently, particularly with the expanded civil authority this bill provides.

Compared to current law, we believe the bill's enhanced criminal penalties, new civil fine and codified cease and desist order authority, would more effectively deter this conduct that seriously harms consumers.

For these reasons, we ask that the Committee return a favorable report on the bill.

cc: Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee