



The Maryland State Dental Association Supports SB 485 – Dental Prophylaxis Care and Oral Health Exams

Respectfully submitted by Daniel T. Doherty, Jr. on behalf of the MSDA

SB 485 corrects a problem that often creates a hardship for dental patients, and which not infrequently denies them covered dental care. Currently the Maryland Dental Medicaid Program provides coverage for dental prophylaxis care and oral health exams twice a year. However, the second dental visit for this care cannot be less than 180 days since the previous treatment. Unfortunately, life does not operate on a six-month schedule of availability.

For example, last year one of our dentists had a medically compromised school child come to his office as a new patient. As the dentist later learned, it had been 5 months and three weeks since the child's last dental cleaning in another dental office. Coverage was denied by Medicaid's Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program. It is an absurd situation when care is covered if 180 days has elapsed, but not when it has been 170+ days between visits. These kinds of situations are not infrequent among students, expectant mothers, and families who are being moved by the military. It is more equitable and sensible to continue to limit these services to twice a year, but cover second treatments if they are provided at an interval of not less than 120 days.

This is the current law in the dental health insurance world. This General Assembly passed legislation in 2012 mandating this same requirement for all dental insurers regulated by the State. However, that law does not apply to Medicaid. This bill will bring Medicaid into conformity with the rest of the dental coverage world, and provide equity in dental care for children who must rely on Medicaid for their oral health needs.

For these reasons the Maryland State Dental Association urges that SB 485 be given a favorable report.

**Respectfully submitted by:
Daniel T. Doherty, Jr.
February 5, 2021**