



The Delores Kelley
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 16, 2021

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 485 – MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – DENTAL PROPHYLAXIS CARE AND ORAL HEALTH EXAMS

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

The Maryland Dental Hygienists Association (MDHA) is an organization seeking to improve the public's total health by advancing the art and science of dental hygiene, including ensuring access to quality oral health care, increasing awareness of the cost-effective benefits of preventative dental services, promoting the highest standards of dental hygiene education, licensure, practice and research, and representing and promoting the interests of dental hygienists in Maryland. In keeping with that mission, MDHA takes this opportunity to voice its support for Senate Bill 485 and the flexibility it creates for essential dental services under Maryland's Medicaid program.

SB485 would allow a grace period of up to 120 days for patients seeking coverage of routine dental services, specifically dental prophylaxis and oral health exams, under Maryland's Medicaid program. The bill would create parity of coverage for these important services between Medicaid patients and those who receive care under private dental insurance. SB485 is consistent with MDHA's ongoing mission to promote and provide widespread access to preventative dental services for all patients, including those receiving services under Medicaid. The bill is particularly helpful for working parents who must balance difficult schedules with the health needs of their families. This Committee has a strong history of recognizing and promoting the benefits of primary and preventive healthcare, and SB485 is another step in that direction.

MDHA thanks Senator Augustine and the members of the Committee for their leadership on dental health matters and looks forward to working with all stakeholders to improve oral health in Maryland. MDHA urges the Committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 485.