



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

February 3, 2021

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB 100 – Task Force on Oral Health in Maryland - Letter of Information

Dear Chair Kelley and Committee Members:

The Department of Health (MDH) is submitting this letter of information on SB 100 – Task Force on Oral Health in Maryland.

SB 100 establishes a task force to (1) analyze the current access to dental services for all residents of the State; (2) identify areas of the State where a significant number of residents are not receiving oral health care services, distinguishing between pediatric and adult populations; (3) identify barriers to receiving dental services in these areas; (4) analyze the impact of these barriers; (5) assess the options to eliminate the barriers; and (6) make recommendations regarding methods to increase access to dental services in the State. An interim report is due on May 1, 2022 and a final report is due December 1, 2022. The Deputy Secretary for Health Care Financing and the Dean of the University of Maryland School of Dentistry would co-chair the task force. The bill requires MDH and the Department of Legislative Services to provide staff for the task force.

The committee should be aware that the work of the proposed task force would be duplicative of efforts undertaken by MDH and the Maryland Dental Action Coalition. The Medical Assistance Program, in conjunction with the Office of Oral Health, submits an annual oral health access report (originally required by SB 598 – Ch. 113 of the Acts of 1998) under Health-General Article, §13-2504(b). The report includes information on Medicaid dental utilization and expenditures, as well as information on the actions taken by the Department and Office of Oral Health to increase access to dental services and overall oral health in the State.

The Office of Oral Health (OOH) was established in 1996 to address a myriad of dental or oral diseases affecting the State's neediest children and adults. The mission of OOH is to improve the oral health of Maryland residents through a variety of public oral health initiatives and interventions. MDAC's mission is to develop and maintain a statewide partnership of individuals and organizations working together to improve the health of all Marylanders through increased oral health promotion, disease prevention, education, advocacy and access to oral health care. In 2018, the organization published a five-year strategic plan to improve access, oral health literacy, and oral disease prevention in the State. Additionally, in 2016, the Hilltop Institute prepared a report for MDAC assessing the potential cost to expand dental services available through the Medicaid Program. In 2017, MDAC submitted a report to the legislature on the annual cost of emergency room visits for individuals who have chronic dental conditions and who are uninsured or covered by Medicaid, Medicare or commercial insurance.

MDAC has expressed its interest in evaluating the Medicaid limited adult dental pilot that was launched in June 2019.

I hope this information is useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Assistant Secretary for Health Policy Webster Ye at (410) 260-3190 or webster.ye@maryland.gov or Deputy Director of Governmental Affairs Heather Shek at the same number or heather.shek@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Webster Ye
Assistant Secretary, Health Policy