



## **Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association**

To the Health and Government Operations Committee

February 9, 2021

House Bill 547 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Prophylaxis Care and Oral Health Exams

### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, Delegate R. Lewis, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 547 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Prophylaxis Care and Oral Health Exams.

MRHA supports this legislation that prohibits a limit on the frequency of dental prophylaxis care or oral health exams that requires the dental prophylaxis care or oral health exams to be provided at an interval greater than 120 days within a plan year. Rural communities suffer from chronic lack of oral and dental care services.

This legislation would increase the available number of services provided to patients that are desperately needed in these communities. It is imperative to bridge gaps in accessing these desperately needed oral and dental health services in rural Maryland.

MRHA's mission is to educate and advocate for the optimal health and wellness of rural communities and their residents. Membership is comprised of health departments, hospitals, community health centers, health professionals, and community members in rural Maryland.

Rural Maryland represents almost 80 percent of Maryland's land area and 25% of its population. Of Maryland's 24 counties, 18 are considered rural by the state, and with a population of over 1.6 million they differ greatly from the urban areas in the state.

And while Maryland is one of the richest states, there is great disparity in how wealth is distributed. The greatest portion of wealth resides around the Baltimore/Washington Region; while further away from the I-95 corridor, differences in the social and economic environment are very apparent.

MRHA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we thank you for your consideration.

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