



Maryland Community Health System

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

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

Hearing Date: February 9, 2021

Position: Support

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *House Bill 547 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Prophylaxis Care and Oral Health Exams*. The bill will increase the utilization of preventative dental services by creating more flexibility in Medicaid’s dental program.

MCHS is a network of federally qualified health centers who focus on serving the uninsured and individuals in the Medicaid and Medicare programs. House Bill 547 will support our health centers’ patients in obtaining regular preventative dental care, including teeth cleaning (prophylaxis) and oral health exams. These services are critical to improving health outcomes and lowering utilization of more expensive emergency care.

Currently, Medicaid participants must wait 6-months between preventative dental visits. HB 547 reduces the wait time between visits from 6-months to 4-months. Coverage would remain at two preventative service visits a year, but there would be more flexibility in the timing of the visits. This flexibility will help our health centers’ patients who face many scheduling and transportation challenges.

The Maryland General Assembly already enacted similar legislation for individuals with private dental insurance in 2012. We ask for a favorable report of HB 547 so that the same flexibility be extended to the Medicaid program. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.