



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of House Bill 547

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

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

HB547 is a bill to prohibit a frequency limitation for scheduling routine dental cleanings or oral health exams for people with Medicaid dental health coverage. In 2012 the Maryland General Assembly enacted legislation (HB 1356) that prohibits a carrier from imposing a requirement that cleanings be at least 120 days apart if two cleanings a year are covered. However this law applies only to state-regulated private insurance plans, and does not extend this flexibility to Medicaid participants, who are still required to wait at least 6 months between cleanings to ensure their cost of service is covered. This bill addresses the gap in the law, so that people with Medicaid will be provided the same level of flexibility in scheduling cleanings as people with private dental insurance.

Providing this flexibility in scheduling routine dental care is important for individuals and families who face scheduling challenges because of work, difficulty accessing child care or reliable transportation, and as a result of these challenges cannot always schedule cleanings in exactly 6-month intervals. Some people might end up missing cleanings because of these issues, and their health could suffer. Regular cleanings are necessary to maintain good oral health and prevent costly problems later. The scheduling requirement for Medicaid participants creates an unnecessary barriers to receiving routine and preventative dental care.

This Committee has spent a great deal of time over the years in considering how to improve access to dental services and preventative care. In 2012, the Maryland General Assembly had the wisdom to address a part of this issue and provide for a little more flexibility in scheduling dental cleanings for people with private insurance. HB 457 provides equity by extending this same flexibility to the Medicaid program, to make it just a little easier for them to take care of their dental health too, and receive the same access to dental care.

I ask the committee for a favorable report.

³ <http://www.mva.maryland.gov/safety/mhso/Maryland-Traffic-Safety-Data.htm>

⁴ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb16-1021>