



The Honorable Shane Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 230
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 9, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 547 – 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 House Bill 457 and the flexibility it creates for essential dental services under Maryland's Medicaid program.

HB547 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. HB547 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 HB547 is another step in that direction.

MDHA thanks Delegate Lewis 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 House Bill 547.