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**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

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The Maryland Dental Action Coalition strongly supports *House Bill 547 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Prophylaxis Care and Oral Health Exams*. The bill will provide more flexibility to Medicaid enrollees to obtain critical preventive dental services. The Maryland General Assembly already established similar flexibility for privately insured individuals through HB 1356 in 2012.

The Maryland Medical Assistance Program covers two dental cleanings (prophylaxis) and oral health exams a year in a preventative services visit. Currently, Medicaid participants must wait at least 6-months between appointments. The bill would allow Medicaid participants to obtain preventative services just 4-months after their last appointment. Total coverage would still be capped at two preventative service visits a year, but there would be more flexibility in the timing of appointments. This flexibility will help individuals and families facing challenges such as:

- Families who are trying to align the appointments of siblings;
- People with mobility challenges who need to avoid traveling in the winter to appointments;
- People facing significant family or work obligations in 6-months and need to obtain care a little earlier; and
- Pregnant women who want to schedule an appointment before their due date.

Maryland Medicaid spends over \$10 million a year on avoidable emergency room visits for dental conditions.<sup>1</sup> We should take common-sense steps, such as HB 547, to make it easier for individuals to obtain regular preventative services. The Maryland General Assembly has already granted more flexibility for coverage in private dental insurance. We ask for a favorable report on HB 547, so that the same flexibility is extended to people with Medicaid. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

***Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders***

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