



Written Testimony in Support of SB 150
Maryland Medical Assistance Program-Dental Coverage for Adults
Dr. Stephen Dargan, of the Maryland State Dental Association
Favorable

Members of the Committee. Thank you for holding a hearing on this important bill. My name is Dr. Stephen Dargan, a practicing dentist of 45 years in Prince Frederick, and current president of the Maryland State Dental Association.

I have participated in the Maryland Healthy Smiles program and MSDA's Donated Dental Program, have been a volunteer chair of the Southern Maryland Missions of Mercy, and have helped develop a senior discount dental program with the Calvert County Office on Aging.

As such, I have seen first-hand the numerous barriers to access in dental care for many, leading to poor overall health pain, and diminished self-esteem. For too long, Maryland residents have not had the opportunity through Medicaid to access oral health care. This has put our hospital emergency departments in situations to simply address the pain, and not the underlying issue.

Speaking on behalf of the MSDA, we strongly support SB 150. Upon passage of this bill, access to quality dental care will finally be available for those adult Marylanders who otherwise go without.

For this program to be successful in meeting the need of the underserved, the implementation and administration MUST have input from provider dentists. A sustainable network of dental providers must be available, backed by seamless registration and an appropriate fee schedule. A repeat of the healthy smiles program of troublesome registration, and no fee increases for over 12 years will discourage initial participation, and future renewal.

In conclusion, SB 150 addresses the oral health needs of vulnerable Maryland citizens. The MSDA supports SB 150, with input from Maryland dentists.