

Cesar R. Sabates, D.D.S.
President

March 4, 2022

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Maryland General Assembly
Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen St., Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Peña-Melnyk:

As the President of the American Dental Association's 161,000 members, I am writing to thank you for introducing HB 1082 and to share some thoughts on the importance of Health Literacy in the oral healthcare arena.

The ADA National Advisory Committee on Health Literacy in Dentistry (NACHLD) is committed to addressing health literacy in order to improve patient understanding of treatment modalities, increase their confidence as healthcare consumers and improve patient outcomes. As dentists, we believe oral health literacy is the foundation of a lifetime of wellness, and that most oral health ailments can be avoided by increasing oral health literacy among all populations. Additionally, oral health literacy must be a cornerstone of improving the utilization of care by underserved populations.

It is my pleasure to write in support of the **Maryland House Bill 1082: Consumer Health Information Hub and Requirements** that would designate The University of Maryland (UMD) Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy (Center) as the state's consumer health information hub. The Center's mission is to advance health literacy in Maryland and the nation, and this bill will provide state and local government agencies, health systems, nonprofit and community-based organizations and other entities with health literacy expertise and resources. With this legislation Maryland will, once again, set a national standard – by removing health literacy barriers and advancing health justice. The Center has had significant relevance in addressing health literacy at the individual, community and societal levels. Its research provides insights not only for Maryland residents, but has national impact as well.

House Bill 1082 would provide the Center an appropriation of \$350,000 per year for three years, and its programs will establish and promote the use of plain language and health literacy criteria, provide certifications and best practices for a variety of organizations; identify health literacy barriers and help organizations address these and monitor progress and report annually to the Maryland General Assembly. In addition to its work in Maryland, the Center has contributed greatly to oral health literacy nationally.

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The ADA provides detailed information about health literacy in dentistry at www.ada.org/resources/community-initiatives/health-literacy-in-dentistry. Should you have additional questions, please contact Kelly Cantor at cantork@ada.org.

Again, thank you for your commitment to enhancing healthy literacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cesar R. Sabates, D.D.S.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cesar R. Sabates, D.D.S.
President

cc: Dr. George R. Shepley, ADA president-elect
Dr. Frank J. Graham, ADA trustee, Fourth District
Dr. Raymond A. Cohlma, ADA executive director
Dr. Gregory Buckler, executive director, Maryland State Dental Association