



Support

Senate Bill 150 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults

House Health and Government Operations Committee

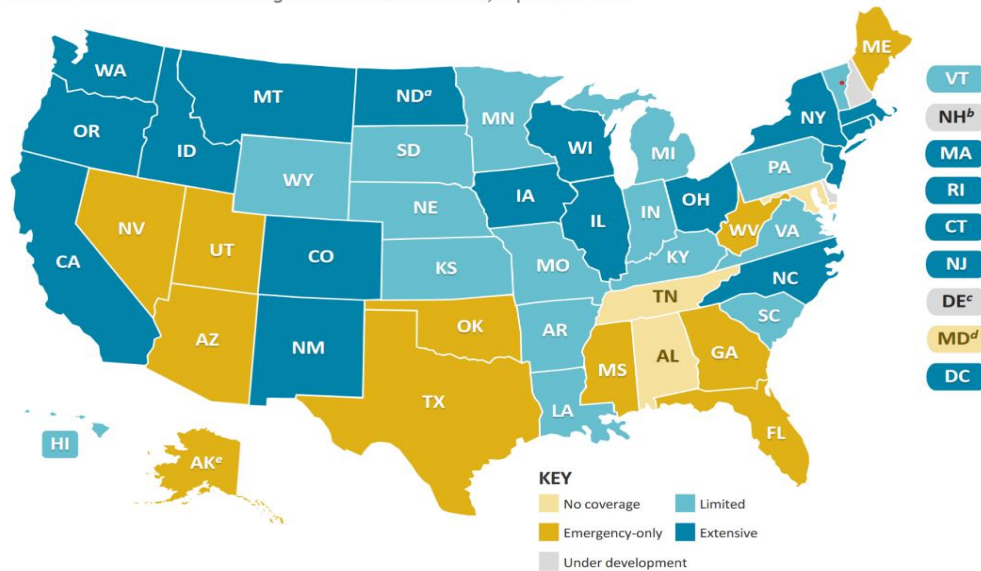
March 30, 2022

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 150 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults*. The bill establishes a comprehensive dental coverage program for all adults in Medicaid.

It’s Time to Close the Gap. Dental Care is Health Care.

Maryland is behind almost every other state for adult coverage in Medicaid. Over thirty other states provide comprehensive or limited dental coverage in Medicaid, with the remaining coverage in emergency situations. Just three states – Alabama, Maryland, and Tennessee – do not provide dental coverage for adults in Medicaid.ⁱ

EXHIBIT 1. State Medicaid Coverage of Adult Dental Benefits, September 2019



Maryland has pockets of adult coverage in Medicaid: dually eligible adults under the age of 65, pregnant and postpartum individuals, and young adults who have aged out of foster care. Managed care organizations may provide some basic benefits – but Maryland law does not require it, so that it could change at any time. This means that about 750,000 adults are left without a reliable source of adult dental coverage that meets their needs for basic preventative and restorative services.

Dental coverage is not a Medicaid cost. It's an investment.

There is a reason that a majority of states provide dental coverage to adults in their Medicaid program. Health care cannot be delivered effectively without dental care. The lack of adult dental coverage drives up health care costs and contributes to health disparities, making it difficult to keep our communities healthy:

Chronic Disease	Behavioral Health	Children's Health	Emergency Dept. Visits
From a NY State Medicaid Study: Reduces chronic disease costs in Medicaid per patient each year: \$772 – Cardiovascular \$2,065 – diabetes \$8,194 – cognitive impairment ⁱⁱ	From a HRSA-Funded Study in Utah: People who receive dental care stay in substance used disorder treatment two times longer, and are more likely to complete treatment. ⁱⁱⁱ	From National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Data: Untreated tooth decay in children dropped by 5% when the parents had Medicaid dental coverage for one year ^{iv}	From an Evaluation of HSCRC Data: Maryland Medicaid spends over \$10 million annually on emergency dept. visits related to chronic dental conditions. ^v

Dental coverage is key to improving health outcomes for all.

Dental coverage is a key strategy to address health disparities. Older non-Hispanic Black or Mexican American adults have 2 to 3 times the rate of untreated cavities as older non-Hispanic White adults.
^{vi}Medicaid coverage improves access to dental care as demonstrated with the Affordable Care Act.

Dental coverage can transform the life of someone you know.

One in four Marylanders^{vii} is covered by Medicaid. We all know someone who is covered by Medicaid, and that person may be a friend, family member, or even ourselves. Dental care can transform lives. If someone suffers from poor oral health, they may face many struggles, including: managing dental pain; controlling a chronic disease; obtaining a job; or even eating. Medicaid dental coverage can mean the difference between suffering and living a productive life for many Marylanders

More information on options for investing in dental coverage

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition appreciates the Committee's consideration of SB 150. To support the consideration of this initiative, we requested that a national consultant, M2, examine financing options for dental coverage in Medicaid. We have attached the report for your consideration. If there is any additional information that we can provide, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ Center for Health Care Strategies. https://www.chcs.org/media/Adult-Oral-Health-Fact-Sheet_091519.pdf

ⁱⁱ NY State Medicaid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hanson GR, McMillan S, Mower K, et al. Comprehensive oral care improves treatment outcomes in male and female patients with high-severity and chronic substance use disorders. *J Am Dent Assoc.* 2019;150(7):591-601. doi:10.1016/j.adaj.2019.02.016

^{iv} The Association Between Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage and Children’s Oral Health. Lipton et al. *Health Affairs* 2021 40:11, 1731-1739

^v Financial Impact of Emergency Department Visits for Dental Conditions in Maryland. CareQuest Institute, 2021. https://www.mdac.us/file_download/inline/2ed08573-f47a-47b4-a535-4bffd815823e

^{vi} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [*Oral Health Surveillance Report: Trends in Dental Caries and Sealants, Tooth Retention, and Edentulism, United States, 1999–2004 to 2011–2016*](#). US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2019.

^{vii} Extrapolated from September 2021 Medicaid enrollment figures presented at October 2021 Medicaid Advisory Committee meeting and 2020 Census <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/pop.html>

For more information, please visit www.mdac.us

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition and the following organizations and individuals support adult dental coverage in Maryland Medicaid:

ORGANIZATIONS

American College of Nurse Midwives – Maryland Affiliate
American Dental Hygienist Association
Area Health Education Center West
Baltimore City Substance Abuse Directorate
Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition
BH Health Services, Inc.
Biotechnology Health Management & Care, LLC
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health
Chesapeake Voyagers, Inc.
Clinical Management and Development Services
Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center
Health Care for the Homeless
Hilda’s Place Behavioral Health Organization
Institute for Behavioral Resources, Inc.
James’ Place, Inc.
Legal Action Center
Maryland Academy of Advanced Practice Clinicians
Maryland Addictions Directors Council
Maryland Assembly for School Based Health Care
Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependency
Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Maryland Coalition of Families
Maryland Community Health Systems
Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine
Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition
Maryland Nurses Association
Maryland Occupational Therapy Association
Mary’s Center
MDHA Dental Hygiene Well Being Committee
Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers
National Council of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of Maryland
New Life Recovery Center
Northern Parkway Treatment Service
OCA/Soul Haven
On Our Own of Carroll County
On Our Own of Howard County
On Our Own of Maryland
Peer Wellness and Recovery Services
Planned Parenthood of Maryland
Public Justice Center
The Coordinating Center
Voices of Hope, Inc.
Wellness and Recovery Community Center, Charles County Freedom Landing, Inc.
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