



HB 1266

UNF

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The Maryland State Dental Association Opposes HB 1266 – Dentists – Saliva Lead Poisoning Screening Tests – Scope of Practice and Requirements

While the MSDA supports the screening for lead poisoning in individuals under 19 years of age, and recognizes oral saliva sample testing as a viable tool in detection, it strongly opposes HB 1266. HB 1266 unnecessarily and inappropriately adds to the statutory scope of the practice of dentistry the collection of “ORAL SALIVA SAMPLES TO SCREEN FOR LEAD POISONING” (in line 14-15 on page 2). Dentists currently may screen for a number of conditions and illnesses. In fact, §-101 (a)(1) (1) (i) includes within the practice of dentistry performing “... any intraoral dental service or intraoral dental operation”. This clearly includes collecting oral saliva samples. Also, the examination of the mouth, teeth, gum and jaw for dental disease and indications of other conditions (HIV for example), is a part of dentistry taught in accredited dental schools and dental residency programs. Thus, this language amending the definition of the practice of dentistry is unnecessary.

In addition, the provisions of §4-510 which direct a dentist as to where to send the sample, and what to do when the dentist receives the results, are unnecessary and ill-advised. It is unnecessary because a provider who takes samples to screen for medical conditions knows how to handle the samples and certainly what they are obligated to do after they receive the results. They are ill-advised because reimbursement requirements of dental insurers or dental Medicaid may be different than these provisions in the bill. Clearly, in those circumstances, a dentist needs to file a claim for reimbursement as prescribed by the third-party payor.

While MSDA supports the screening for lead poisoning in pediatric dental patients, what is needed is legislation to require that Maryland’s Dental Medicaid Program provide for reimbursement for screening for lead poisoning. In this way a much greater number of the at-risk children can be protected.

For these reasons the MSDA respectfully requests that HB 1266 be given an unfavorable report.

Submitted by:
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