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Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Title: Senate Bill 582 – Behavioral Health Care - Treatment and Access (Behavioral Health Model for Maryland)

Hearing Date: March 7, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 582 – Behavioral Health – Treatment and Access*. The bill provides for a comprehensive planning process to improve access to behavioral health. The bill also extends provisions of telehealth reimbursement for an additional two years – including extending the provision for reimbursement parity for telehealth services and reimbursement for audio-only services. The underlying telehealth reimbursement law already includes reimbursement for teledentistry. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Maryland Medical Assistance Program has reimbursed for teledentistry using a procedure code established by the American Dental Association.

Through telehealth during the pandemic, dentists have been able to provide remote consultations and then follow-up with in-person services as necessary. The pandemic has accelerated the implementation of telehealth to address access issues by:

- Connecting patients in remote areas to specialists. This is particular critical in rural areas;
- Providing emergency consults and diverting patients from emergency rooms; and
- Allowing dentist to provide consults to patients who face mobility and transportation issues.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders