



# Board of Dental Examiners

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary*

*Arpana S. Verma, President – Christy Collins, Executive Director*

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March 7, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

## **Re: HB 970 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Hospitals -Dental Services – Letter of Support**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners is submitting this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 970 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Hospitals – Dental Services. The bill requires each acute care hospital in the State that participate in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to develop an annual plan for approval by the Secretary of Health that demonstrates a commitment by the hospital to provide adequate operating room time for pediatric dental services, dental services for adults with disabilities, and dental services for the community served by the hospital.

The Dental Board supports the bill. Denial of access to hospital operating rooms for pediatric dental care is a growing problem in the United States. Financial pressures have forced some hospitals to prioritize surgical procedures based on profitability since traditional medical procedures are better reimbursed than dental procedures.

Maryland is clearly affected. The Board has received a number of complaints from dentists throughout the State indicating that they have been denied access to hospital operating rooms to treat children and adults with disabilities. Many of these cases involve comprehensive dental care where anesthesia related services are necessary. The dentists involved may not themselves have an anesthesia permit or do not believe that extensive dental services should be provided under general anesthesia in a dental office should untoward complications arise. Delaying or denying necessary treatment including severe early childhood caries may result in worsening of the dentition, chronic pain, and increased emergency room visits. It is hoped that by increasing operating room time more of the states' most vulnerable citizens may receive timely dental care.

For these reasons, the Dental Board requests that HB 970 receive a favorable report.

I hope that this information is helpful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at 240-498-8159, [asverma93@gmail.com](mailto:asverma93@gmail.com), or Dr. Edwin Morris, the Board's Legislative Committee Chair at 410-218-4203. In addition, the Board's Executive Director, Dr. Christy Collins may be reached at 410-402-8518, [christy.collins1@maryland.gov](mailto:christy.collins1@maryland.gov).

The opinion of the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners expressed in this letter of support does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the administration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arpana S. Verma", is written over a light gray grid background.

Arpana S. Verma, D.D.S.  
Board President