



10015 Old Columbia Road, Suite B-215  
Columbia, Maryland 21046  
www.mdac.us

**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Bill Number:** House Bill 1148 – Behavioral Health Care – Treatment and Access

**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2023

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) strongly supports *House Bill 1148 – 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](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

***Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders***