



The Maryland State Dental Association Supports HB 970 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Hospitals – Dental Services

Over the past several years the availability of hospital operating room time for acute dental services has decreased to the point that it was virtually nonexistent by mid-November 2022. This has left scores of children and special needs patients suffering from oral infections and pain. The sponsor of HB 970, Delegate Pena-Melnyk, initiated a work group to address this crisis. Over the course of 10 Zoom meetings much has been accomplished on the short term, with the Maryland Hospital Association working with its members to: increase the OR time for pediatric and special needs patients; and attempting to expedite the credentialing process for dental providers to obtain hospital privileges at these facilities. However, a legislative enactment is needed to assure continued future access for dental patients suffering from acute dental conditions.

HB 970 is a significant step in accomplishing this goal. It will require any acute care hospital that participates in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to develop a plan that shows that the hospital is committed to providing adequate operating room time for: pediatric dental services; dental services for adults with disabilities; and dental services for the community served by the hospital. Under HB 970 each hospital participating in the Program shall, before January 1 of each year, submit a conforming plan to the Secretary for approval.

The Maryland State Dental Association is in strong support of HB 190 and requests that it be given a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted by:
Daniel T. Doherty, Jr., on behalf of the MSDA
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