



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: March 3rd, 2023

RE: HB0970 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Hospitals –

Dental Services

The MLLC supports HB0970 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Hospitals – Dental Services, 2023

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0970.

HB0970 addresses the challenges that Maryland currently faces regarding the need for anesthesia services during dental surgical procedures, particularly for pediatric and special needs patients, in operating room (OR) settings.

This is pertinent to the Latino community as many persons of color already experience barriers to adequate and quality care.¹ Because of this lack of access, Latinos are more likely to experience oral health problems. Untreated caries was nearly twice as high for Hispanic children (26%) compared with non-Hispanic white children (14%) aged 6–9 years;² and 51% of all participants in a 2014 study had exhibited periodontitis.³ Among adults aged 25–44, tooth retention was lower for Hispanic (46%), compared with non-Hispanic white adults (58%), and complete tooth retention was more prevalent among non-Hispanic white adults (35%) aged 45–64 compared with Hispanic adults (19%).⁴ About 17.5% of Hispanic adults have Dental insurance, ten percentage points less than the national average.⁵ This bill aims to eliminate the barriers associated with dental procedures, particularly for our most vulnerable populations that require anesthesia to perform them.

HB970 requires acute care hospitals that participate in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to develop a plan that demonstrates a commitment by the hospital to provide operating room time for certain dental services, particularly related to dental procedures under anesthesia. This will help to close the dental care access gap for all Marylanders.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0970.

¹ Scott, G. (2005). *Access to Dental Care Among Hispanic or Latino Subgroups: United States, 2000–03* (No. 354). Center for Disease Control.

² Dye, B. A., Li, X., & Thornton-Evans, G. (2012). *Oral Health Disparities as Determined by Selected Healthy People 2020 Oral Health Objectives for the United States, 2009–2010* (No. 96).

³ Jiménez, M. C., Sanders, A. E., Mauriello, S. M., Kaste, L. M., & Beck, J. D. (2014). Prevalence of periodontitis by Hispanic/Latino background among study participants of the Hispanic Community Cohort Study/Study of Latinos. *Journal of the American Dental Association* (1939), 145(8), 805–816.

⁴ Dye, B. A., Li, X., & Thornton-Evans, G. (2012). *Oral Health Disparities as Determined by Selected Healthy People 2020 Oral Health Objectives for the United States, 2009–2010* (No. 96).

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db337-h.pdf>