



MARYLAND SOCIETY OF ANESTHESIOLOGISTS

Date: March 7, 2023

Committee: The Honorable Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 1146 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Adult and Pediatric Dental Services –
Review of Reimbursement Rates

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Society of Anesthesiologists (MSA) is a state component society of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA). The MSA is a non-profit physician organization dedicated to promoting the safest and highest standards of the profession of anesthesiology in the State of Maryland. Our purpose is to advocate on behalf of our members for their patients through policy, education, and research.

As introduced House Bill 1146 would require *“the Department of Health, on or before December 1, 2023 and every 3 years thereafter, to conduct a review of billed charges and reimbursement rates for adult and pediatric dental services. The Department would be required to use the data in the review to revise the reimbursement rates for adult and pediatric dental services provided under the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, and to ensure that the reimbursement rates are sufficient to ensure access to care to Program recipients.”*

House Bill 1146 takes an important step to ensure that the Medicaid Pediatric and Adult dental program can operate to its fullest potential. Anesthesiologists are the physician provider in these cases, many of which must be done in the hospital operating room setting. The children receiving dental care may often require general anesthesia to allow the dentist to perform extensive procedures to repair and in some cases remove a child’s teeth. These procedures have been subject to an ongoing imbalance with the physician anesthesiologists involved in the care of these patients. The regular review of rates and corresponding rate updates will help to sustain the program moving forward.

Pediatric dental surgeries are complex and difficult cases that require very young patients to be fully anesthetized, and often times the anesthesiologist may be the sole physician provider involved in their care. Anesthesia groups in Maryland cannot sustain their viability with low commercial rates and the underpayment of Medicare and Medicaid. This in turn negatively impacts patient care, especially the availability and timeliness of procedures and surgeries.

We applaud the State’s goals and have attempted to be a meaningful part of the pediatric Dental Medicaid program since the beginning. The anesthesiologists and the dentists are partners in these dental surgery cases when treating these vulnerable pediatric patients. We ask that Medicaid provide fair payment to ensure the anesthesiologists are available to staff hospital ORs to address this resurgent crisis.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

For additional information please contact Dan Shattuck, Executive Director at mdashq@gmail.com.