



576 Johnsville Road
Sykesville, MD 21784

TO: Finance Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 600, Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Dental Services - Coverage and Rate Study
DATE: February 16, 2024
POSITION: **Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports Senate Bill 600, Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Dental Services - Coverage and Rate Study

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 140 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

Senate Bill 600 requires the Maryland Department of Health to study the feasibility of including removable full and partial dentures and setting adequate reimbursement rates for providers on a per-patient basis for house calls and extended care facility calls among the coverage offered by the Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program. The Department must report its findings from the study to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee by December 1, 2024.

Oral health impacts general health. The mouth is the primary access point for the nutrition and oxygen every living body needs to survive. Good oral health is an essential part of overall wellbeing. Poor dentition can lead to (by mouth) intake which leads to all sorts of other issues- weight loss, wound development, cognitive decline, malnutrition, increased need for (by mouth) medications with various side effects.

A number of Medicaid programs in other States cover all or part of the cost of dentures. They include:

- Medicaid covers dentures for Alaskans with prior authorization.
- Idaho's Medicaid program considers dentures to be therapeutic devices and covers them.
- Partial and complete dentures are covered under Louisiana's Medicaid program.
- Michigan's Medicaid program, known as Healthy Michigan, covers partial and full dentures for adults.
- Medicaid in Montana covers dentures, and dentures do not count toward the per-recipient dental treatment services cap of \$1,125.
- Nevada's Medicaid covers full and partial dentures to replace missing teeth on an emergency basis.
- In New York, dentures, oral surgery and periodontal services are covered for adults under New York Medicaid.
- In North Carolina, dentures are a covered expense under North Carolina's Medicaid program.
- In North Dakota, dentures are available for Medicaid recipients under age 18 in North Dakota.
- In South Dakota, Medicaid covers the cost of dentures, including dentures that exceed the \$1,000 annual dental coverage limit for adults.

Proper dental coverage is critical to overall health and provides patients with a sense of dignity - being able to smile with confidence, talk with others and consume the least restrictive food texture. LeadingAge Maryland fully supports studying the feasibility of Medicaid coverage for full or partial dentures.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 600.

**For more information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, Greenfield Law, LLC,
410.446.1992**