



The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair  
House Ways and Means Committee  
House Office Building, Room 130  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT  
HOUSE BILL 167 – PUBLIC SCHOOLS – STUDENT HEALTH – CERTIFICATE OF DENTAL  
HEALTH

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Dental Hygienists Association (MDHA) is an organization seeking to improve the public's total health by advancing the art and science of dental hygiene, including ensuring access to quality oral health care, increasing awareness of the cost-effective benefits of preventative dental services, promoting the highest standards of dental hygiene education, licensure, practice and research, and representing and promoting the interests of dental hygienists in Maryland.

In keeping with those goals, MDHA takes this opportunity to voice its support for House Bill 167, which would require, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, each student enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in the State, to submit a certificate of dental health to their school; and requiring the State Department of Education, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health, to adopt certain regulations and to develop and disseminate a standard form for a certificate of dental health to county boards of education and parents and guardians of certain students.

By establishing similar requirements for oral health certificates for Maryland's children as are currently in place for physical health, HB167 elevates the importance of pediatric oral health and emphasizes its significant role as part of overall health. Oral health problems are one of the main health conditions that cause children to miss school in the United States, so using public policy to ensure these problems are addressed in a timely and effective manner is essential. Additionally, making dental health an required part of attending public schools in Maryland creates an opportunity to educate both students and families about available preventative and restorative dental services and programs, including those offered directed to students in public school systems throughout the State.

Maryland has been a leader in emphasizing the importance of oral health and taken several significant steps to make sure Marylanders have access to affordable, quality dental care. HB167 is another important tool in the public health initiative and MDHA thanks Delegate Harrison for her ongoing leadership on this issue. MDHA respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 167.