

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 12, 2025

SB 456 - Dental Services - Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of Dental Online Credentialing**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **SB 456**, which expands eligibility for the Maryland Dent-Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MDC-LARP) and enhances efforts to streamline credentialing processes for dental professionals. By allowing part-time dentists and dental hygienists to qualify for loan repayment assistance and directing the Maryland Insurance Administration to study the use of online credentialing systems, this bill takes important steps toward strengthening Maryland's oral healthcare workforce and improving access to dental care for low-income residents. Expanding eligibility to part-time providers ensures that more trained professionals can enter and remain in the workforce, particularly in rural and underserved communities where dental care shortages persist.

Maryland's community colleges play a key role in training the state's dental workforce, offering dental hygiene programs that prepare students for in-demand careers. Dental hygienists may work in multiple part-time roles across different practices, meaning that previous loan repayment restrictions have excluded them from participating in MDC-LARP. By recognizing the realities of the modern dental workforce, SB 456 provides much-needed support for professionals who serve Medicaid patients and communities with limited access to care. Community colleges remain committed to expanding access to affordable, high-quality dental education and ensuring trained professionals can practice in the state. Investing in these initiatives strengthens the pipeline of dental hygienists and providers, helping Maryland meet growing healthcare needs. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **SB 456**.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.