

**SB456 - MDHA - FAV.pdf**

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Position: FAV



**Maryland**  
**DENTAL HYGIENISTS'**  
**ASSOCIATION**

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman  
Chair, Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT: SENATE BILL 456 – DENTAL SERVICES – QUALIFICATION FOR MARYLAND DENT- CARE PROGRAM AND STUDY ON USE OF DENTAL ONLINE CREDENTIALING

Dear Chair Feldman 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 that mission, MDHA takes this opportunity to voice its support for Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of Dental Online Credentialing, which would adjust the eligibility criteria for higher education loan assistance grants within the Maryland Dent-Care Program to include dental practitioners practicing part-time in eligible settings.

Expanded eligibility of the Dent-Care Program, under the parameters outlined in SB456, would provide another incentive for current and incoming dental hygienists to prioritize vulnerable and underserved patient populations in how they provide essential, preventative oral healthcare services. Due to the nature of their scope of practice and the preventative services they provide, dental hygienists are often more mobile and better able to serve as oral health envoys in underserved populations and geographic areas, and this expansion of the Dent-Care program will support those dental hygienists as they seek to balance the cost of their training with their passion for practice. As a significantly female profession, subject to significant workforce challenges and a profession facing a growing workforce shortage, SB456 provides another essential tool for the State to support and incentivize these essential providers.

MDHA takes this opportunity to thank Senator McKay for his leadership on this issue and the Committee for its consideration of the legislation. We urge the Committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 456.



**SB0456\_FAV\_MACHC\_Dental Serv. - Qualification MD D**

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



Senate Finance Committee

February 12, 2025

Senate Bill 456 – *Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of Dental Online Credentialing*

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

The Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC) is the federally designated Primary Care Association for Delaware and Maryland Community Health Centers. As the backbone of the primary care safety net, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are united by a shared mission to ensure access to high-quality health care to all individuals, regardless of ability to pay. FQHCs are non-profit organizations providing comprehensive primary care to the medically underserved and uninsured. MACHC supports its members in the delivery of accessible, affordable, cost effective, and quality primary health care to those most in need. To this end, MACHC supports Senate Bill 456.

Senate Bill 456 expands eligibility for the Maryland Dent-Care Program to include dentists and dental hygienists employed on a part-time basis and requires the establishment of a prorated loan repayment assistance for any part-time dentists and dental hygienists participating in the program. The purpose of Maryland's Dent-Care Program is to increase access to oral health services for underserved Maryland Medicaid recipients by increasing the number of dentists and dental hygienists who treat that population.

FQHCs in Maryland provide dental services and play a primary role in providing essential oral healthcare services to underserved populations. However, FQHCs have experienced an increasing challenge to recruit and retain dental professionals. Expanding loan repayment assistance to qualified part-time dentists and dental hygienists will help address the dental provider shortage and enhance the ability to provide oral health care services to Maryland's medically underserved residents. A favorable report is requested.

**For more information call:**

Christine K. Krone  
Danna L. Kauffman  
410-244-7000

**SB0456\_MACC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FAV

**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**

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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](mailto:bphillips@mdacc.org)) or Drew Jabin ([djabin@mdacc.org](mailto:djabin@mdacc.org)) with questions.

**2025 MASBHC SB 456 Senate Side.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Dorrien

Position: FAV





**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study

**Hearing Date:** February 12, 2025

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Centers (MASBHC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study*. The bill would provide more flexibility for the Maryland Dent-Care Program. This loan repayment program is currently only available to full-time dentists and dental hygienists. The bill would allow for part-time dentists and dental hygienists to apply as well.

There are almost 90 school-based health centers across Maryland providing primary care and behavioral health care to underserved student communities. About one-third of school-based health centers provide dental services. More school-based health centers want to provide dental care, but face many barriers including dental provider shortages. This legislation would be helpful to recruitment and retention efforts, as school-based health centers are likely to only need dental providers on a part-time basis. These dentists and dental hygienists are not currently eligible for the Maryland Dent-Care Program, unless they work full-time across multiple school-based health centers.

In addition, we support the study to examine if dental carriers are using an online system for credentialing. School-based health centers have limited administrative resources. The study would help provide information on whether online credentialing is an option with dental carriers.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

**Letter\_Support\_SB456\_Womens\_Caucus.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kecia Munroe

Position: FAV

DEL. DANA JONES, DISTRICT 30A  
*President*

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DEL. JENNIFER WHITE HOLLAND, DISTRICT 10  
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*Parliamentarian*

DEL. JACQUELINE T. ADDISON, DISTRICT 45  
*At Large*

DEL. KYM TAYLOR, DISTRICT 23  
*At Large*

**WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND**  
**THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

February 10, 2025

To: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our unanimous support for **SB456: Dental Services - Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of Dental Online Credentialing**. This vital piece of legislation expands eligibility for Higher Education Loan Assistance Grants provided by the Office of Student Financial Assistance, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, to include part-time dentists and dental hygienists.

Women make up a significant majority of part-time dentists and dental hygienists in Maryland. By expanding eligibility for these grants, **SB456** provides essential financial relief and support to these professionals, empowering them to manage their student loan debt while advancing their careers. This legislation recognizes the unique challenges faced by women in dentistry, many of whom balance their professional responsibilities with caregiving and other commitments, which often necessitate part-time work.

**SB456** represents a thoughtful and impactful step toward addressing the financial burdens faced by women in dentistry and supporting their continued contributions to Maryland's healthcare landscape. It reflects a commitment to equity, opportunity, and recognition of the vital role women play in ensuring the health and well-being of our residents.

We respectfully urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report for SB456. Together, we can make meaningful progress in supporting Maryland's women professionals and the communities they serve.

Thank you for your consideration and for your dedication to improving the lives of Marylanders.

**2025 MDAC SB 456 Senate Side.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mary Backley

Position: FAV



10015 Old Columbia Road, Suite B-215  
Columbia, Maryland 21046  
www.mdac.us

**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of Dental Online Credentialing

**Hearing Date:** February 12, 2025

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of Dental Online Credentialing*. The bill will provide needed flexibility to the Dent Care Loan Repayment Program by adding eligibility for part-time dentists and dental hygienists. The bill also requires the Maryland Insurance Administration to conduct a study of the use of online credentialing platforms among dental carriers.

### **The Need for Loan Repayment Programs for Dental Providers**

In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly enacted legislation to extend dental coverage to nearly 800,000 adults participated in Medicaid. This legislation recognized that oral health is a part of overall health. With the establishment of adult dental coverage, Maryland is improving health outcomes and lowering the cost of chronic diseases. The Maryland Department of Health reported that 181,216 people adults obtained dental services under Medicaid in 2024. This number demonstrates the success of the program in reaching Marylanders across our state.

MDAC has been partnering with the dental community, consumer advocates, and the Maryland Department of Health to expand the number of providers serving Medicaid participants. For our community health centers and private practices with high numbers of Medicaid participants, loan repayment is an important recruitment and retention tool, as they do not have the resources to compete on compensation alone.

***Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders***

## **With Part-Time Eligibility, the Dent Care Program Would Reflect the Needs of the Workforce**

Community health centers and private practices are particularly struggling to recruit and retain dental hygienists. According to the Health Policy Institute (American Dental Association) latest quarterly report, 92% of dental practices reporting that it had been extremely or very challenging when recruiting dental hygienists.<sup>i</sup>

This bill provides eligibility for part-time practitioners for loan repayment under Maryland's Dent Care Program. Loan repayment programs should reflect the needs of the workforce.

- **The number of dental hygienists working part-time is increasing. According to a survey, the number of dental hygienists working full-time dropped from 68.2% in March 2020 to 57.6% in August 2021, while the percentage of dental hygienists working part-time is increasing.**<sup>ii</sup>
- Women are more likely to work part-time because of child care, elder care, and other family obligations.<sup>iii</sup>
  - 96% of dental hygienists are women<sup>iv</sup>;
  - 54.5% of dental graduates – are women who also are more likely to need to work part-time.<sup>v</sup>

Other loan repayment programs for clinicians recognize the value in providing for part-time eligibility:

- In Maryland, other loan repayment programs for clinicians – physicians, physician assistants, and nurses – provide for part-time eligibility.
- The National Health Service Corp and at least fourteen other states provide for part-time eligibility for dental providers (AZ, CA, CO, DE, MA, MT, NH, ND, OH, OR, PA, VT, WA, and WV).<sup>vi</sup>

## **Conclusion**

We ask for the Committee's support in updating the eligibility of the Dent Care Program. If enacted, the bill would support of community health centers and private dental practice in reaching a wider range of dental providers in their recruitment efforts. If we can provide any additional testimony, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

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<sup>i</sup> [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/sept2024\\_hpi\\_economic\\_outlook\\_dentistry\\_main.pdf?rev=a9c8497a7f7144d3837346cac311c488&hash=090A0346A769686474FD634B9355B5D9](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/sept2024_hpi_economic_outlook_dentistry_main.pdf?rev=a9c8497a7f7144d3837346cac311c488&hash=090A0346A769686474FD634B9355B5D9)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://jdha.adha.org/content/96/1/27>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/2021/>

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<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.rdhmag.com/career-profession/inspiration/article/14186906/browngirl-rdh-promoting-diversity-in-the-dental-hygiene-profession>

<sup>v</sup> [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental\\_school\\_grads\\_gender\\_2023-24.pdf?rev=f60fe5b32e0848529a087cdcac9e42c2&hash=3A569643D4289D372ABF6E8DA79119FA](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental_school_grads_gender_2023-24.pdf?rev=f60fe5b32e0848529a087cdcac9e42c2&hash=3A569643D4289D372ABF6E8DA79119FA)

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.adea.org/advocacy/state/loan-forgiveness-programs.aspx>

***Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders***

**SB456.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV



**MIKE MCKAY**  
*Legislative District 1*  
Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



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Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Executive Nominations Committee

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

*Cumberland Office*  
100N Mechanic Street  
Cumberland, Maryland 21502  
240-362-7040

*Joint Committees*  
Administrative, Executive,  
and Legislative Review  
Children, Youth, and Families  
Program Open Space and Agricultural  
Land Preservation

*Williamsport Office*  
2N Conococheque Street  
Williamsport Town Hall  
Williamsport, Maryland

**Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of  
Dental Online Credentialing**

January 22, 2025

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Senate Bill 456 expands eligibility for the Maryland Dent-Care Program to include dentists as well as dental hygienists employed on a part-time basis. The bill also requires that the Maryland Higher Education Commission's Office of Student Financial Assistance collaborate with MDH to establish allocated loan repayment assistance for any part-time dentists/dental hygienists participating in the program. The Maryland Insurance Administration must study whether insurance carriers are using online credentialing services. This must be done by December 1, 2025 and reported to the Senate Finance Committee and the Health and Government Operations Committee.

I thank you for your time and I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike McKay".

Senator Mike McKay  
Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland  
Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties

**2025 MCHS SB 456 Senate Side.pdf**

Uploaded by: Salliann Alborn

Position: FAV



## Maryland Community Health System

**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

**Bill:** Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on the Use of Dental Online Credentialing

**Hearing Date:** February 12, 2025

**Position:** Support

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Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) strongly supports *Senate Bill 456 – Dental Services Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of Online Credentialing*. This bill expands the eligibility for the Maryland Dent-Care Program to include part-time dentists and dental hygienists. The bill also requires the Maryland Insurance Administration to assess the status of online credentialing among dental carriers.

### **Urgent Need for More Dental Hygienists and Dentists at FQHCs**

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) is a network of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) that serve underserved communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas across Maryland. FQHC dental clinics are major components of the dental safety net system, providing essential oral healthcare services to underserved populations. Building and expanding dental clinics and retaining dental providers within existing FQHCs is an important strategy to bridge the gap between medical and dental services offered by FQHCs.

Maryland has long experienced a shortage of dentists and dental hygienists. Our health centers have particularly commented on the severity of the dental hygienist shortage. Some federally qualified health centers have dental hygienist vacancies that have been open for nearly a year.

**The Maryland FQHC experience reflects national trends. According to the Health Policy Institute’s (American Dental Association) latest quarterly report, 92% of dental practices reporting that it had been extremely or very challenging when recruiting dental hygienists.<sup>1</sup>**

FQHCs use loan repayment programs as part of their strategy to recruit and retain clinicians. To be effective, loan repayment programs should reflect the needs of the workforce. Given the need of

many clinicians to provide child care or elder care, the loan repayment programs for physicians, physician assistants, and nurse provide eligibility for part-time clinicians. The Maryland Dent-Care Program should be updated to align with Maryland's other loan repayment program.

If Maryland's Dent-Care Program is updated to provide eligibility for part-time clinicians, it will help in the recruitment and retention of both dentists and dental hygienists. The change would be particularly impactful in recruiting dental hygienists. Ninety-five percentage of dental hygienists are women, and women are more likely than men to work part-time because of family obligations.<sup>ii</sup>

### **On-line Credentialing for Dental Carriers**

MCHS recently convened a group of credentialing managers at FQHCs to understand their infrastructure needs. We learned that most dental carriers do not have an online credentialing process, unlike health insurers that use the CAQH online platform for credentialing. As a result, it is particularly time-consuming and burdensome to enroll dentists in provider panels. The bill requires the Maryland Insurance Administration to survey dental carriers in an effort to better understand the barriers to online credentialing.

### **Conclusion**

MCHS strongly supports this bill because it will help federally qualified health centers recruit and retain dental providers and meet the needs of our patients. We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

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<sup>i</sup> [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/sept2024\\_hpi\\_economic\\_outlook\\_dentistry\\_main.pdf?rev=a9c8497a7f7144d3837346cac311c488&hash=090A0346A769686474FD634B9355B5D9](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/sept2024_hpi_economic_outlook_dentistry_main.pdf?rev=a9c8497a7f7144d3837346cac311c488&hash=090A0346A769686474FD634B9355B5D9)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.rdhmag.com/career-profession/inspiration/article/14186906/browngirl-rdh-promoting-diversity-in-the-dental-hygiene-profession>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental\\_school\\_grads\\_gender\\_2023-24.pdf?rev=f60fe5b32e0848529a087cdcac9e42c2&hash=3A569643D4289D372ABF6E8DA79119FA](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental_school_grads_gender_2023-24.pdf?rev=f60fe5b32e0848529a087cdcac9e42c2&hash=3A569643D4289D372ABF6E8DA79119FA)

## **SB 456**

Uploaded by: Charles A. Doring DDS

Position: FWA

SB 456, In Support with MSDA Amendments

Written Testimony in Support with MSDA Amendments for SB 456 from  
Charles A. Doring DDS a Maryland Health Smiles (Dental Medicaid) Provider

Submitted 2/10/2025 for hearing 2/12/2025

Dear Members of the Maryland Senate Education, Energy, & Environment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide oral and written testimony in support with amendments to SB 456. I am a general dentist in a small group practice in Rockville that employes a team of 15 dental health providers and support staff. I am also the president elect of the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) as well as Deans Faculty member at our University of Maryland School of Dentistry. I am speaking to you today as an individual and Medicaid provider to you today.

The Maryland Dent-Care Tuition Repayment program is designed to help young dentist and dental hygienist to establish long term "roots" in communities that are Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA). According the American Student Dental Association (ASDA) the average student dental school debt was \$293,900 for 2022 dental degree graduates. This debt is much higher than any other professional school including law and medicine. Such debt greatly influences a young dentist's practice location choices and is a deterrent to being a dental Medicaid provider early on in their professional career. By contract, according to the American Dental Education Association, dental hygienists graduate in debt between \$20,000 to \$30,000. (Feb. 29,2024)

Again, this year, legislation has been introduced to fundamentally change the focus of the Maryland Dent-Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program. The bill would change and expand the eligibility of the program to include part-time and limited license practitioners.

This program is critical in encouraging people to practice in underserved areas of the state. However, the program has been historically underfunded, and especially in a budget year such as this, there simply is not funding to expand the program to part-time dentists. We also believe that part-time dentists are far less likely to stay in the HPSA after their three-year commitment due to insurmountable student debt, undermining the goal of the program to help dentists make an underserved area their long-term home, and continue to serve the Medicaid population. Dental hygienist graduate with less debt and would like the flexibility that part time work affords. Testimony by Registered Dental Hygienists on crossfiled bill HB 265 illustrated the need, particularly in Federally Qualified Health Care settings, for part time flexibility. It should be noted, no dentist testified in favor of part time work.

My oral testimony will focus on how import the need for fully licensed dental practioners are needed in HPSA areas to establish long term "roots." MSDA Foundation has placed a focus on attracting pre-dent student from HPSA to apply to dental school. Our Foundation has awarded scholarships to these well deserving undergrad students to sit for the Dental Admission Test (DAT) which is currently \$540. The goal is to assist these students' applications to dental school with the hope they will return to their hometown "roots". I grew up in Montgomery County, a product of the Montgomery County Public School System and spent my fist 2 years of undergraduate school at Montgomery College. I know how important it is to return home full time and give back to my community.

For the above reasons, I ask for a favorable report with MSDA amendments to SB 456.

# **MSDA Support w amendments of SB 456 - Dent-Care Pr**

Uploaded by: Daniel Doherty

Position: FWA



## **The Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) Supports with Amendments SB 456 – Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of Dental On-Line Credentialing**

*Submitted by Daniel T. Doherty, Jr. on Behalf of the Maryland State Dental Association*

The Maryland Dent-Care Program was established and has operated with a 2-fold purpose. First, to provide financial assistance to dentists following dental school who are saddled with tremendous debt from student loans. Second, to link this financial assistance to a 3-year obligation whereby the dentist agrees that at least 30% of the patients treated in a private practice or clinical setting will be Maryland Medical Assistance Program recipients. The requirement of the Program that the recipient commit to 3-years of treating at least 30% Medicaid patients is also to expose more dentists and dental hygienists to patients in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA), to incentivize them, following the completion of their commitment, to stay in the area and continue to provide dental care to that HPSA Dental Medicaid population. Traditionally, the grant recipients have been graduates of the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, and graduates of other dental schools who are, or intend to become, Maryland based dental providers. The program requires that the recipients continue to be employed for the 3 years as **full-timed dentists**.

In 2023 the General Assembly passed HB 290 which among other provisions increased the amount of the grants to a dentist to \$50,000 per year for up to 3 years. It also expanded the program to include dental hygienists as eligible for grants of not more than \$10,000 for 2 years. Currently there are, on average, 6 dentists per year in the Program or an average total of 18. Last year there were 24 dental applicants and only 8 grants were able to be awarded due to budget limitation. Also, in the first year of eligibility 10 dental hygienists applied, and 5 grants were awarded. The intent was to provide larger grants in an effort to increase the number of dental providers willing to provide care in an HPSA. However, the funding has not been available to significantly increase the number of grants. Since the average student debt for a recent graduate of dental school is between \$300,000 and \$400,000, it seems unlikely that many dentists would be able to afford to practice only part-time. Based on testimony in the House HGO Committee, this may not be true for dental hygienists.

SB 456 proposes to include part-time licensed dentists and dental hygienists as eligible recipients of Maryland Dent-Care Grants. The MSDA strongly opposes these changes because part-time dentists are far less likely to stay in the HPSA in which they have been practicing for 3 years, thus undermining the goal of these recipients making the HPSA their “home” and continuing to serve the Dental Medicaid population. Including part-time dentists will further dilute the budgetary appropriation for this program, and reduce the probability of dentists committing their practices to this population.

Similar legislation introduced in the 2024 Session (SB 334 and HB 393) would have extended eligibility for the Program to both holders of general dental licenses and limited dental licenses. The sponsor’s testimony in the House on HB 265, the cross file to SB 456, was that as a result of objections to the inclusion of “limited licensees”, HB 265 removed “limited licensees”. In fact, SB 456 and HB 265 do not exclude limited licensees. In the Health Occupations Article, the Dentistry Act § 4-101(h) defines a



“license” as a license issued by the Board to practice dentistry or dental hygiene. §4-101(h)(2) states that “License” includes both a general license to practice dentistry and a limited license to practice dentistry (See requested Amendments included with this testimony). Thus, to include all licensed dentists as eligible to apply for a Dent-Care grant permits the awarding of grants to internationally trained dentists who have limited licenses to practice dentistry because, while they may be in the process of satisfying the prerequisites needed to be issued a general license to practice dentistry, they have not yet satisfied the requirements. There are different pathways for internationally trained dentists to become eligible for a general license, among them is a commitment to practice in clinics that provide care to Medicaid recipients. This is in lieu of additional years of dental school. Until they have met the prerequisites of such a pathway, they should not be eligible for a Maryland Dent-Care grant, just as dental school students who have not completed the four-year curriculum and examination requirements of dental school and do not have a general license are not eligible for a grant.

**For these reasons, the MSDA respectfully requests that SB 456 be amended to require that applicants hold general licenses to practice dentistry or dental hygiene, and that the bill also be amended to limited part time eligibility to dental hygienists only.**

**Submitted February 10, 2025  
Daniel T. Doherty, Jr.**

**Amendments to SB 456 – Dental Services -Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program  
and Study on Use of Dental Online Credentialing**  
*Respectfully submitted by Daniel T. Doherty, Jr. on behalf of the Maryland State Dental  
Association*

**AMENDMENT No. 1:** On page 2 in line 4 strike “Be licensed” and insert “**HOLD A GENERAL LICENSE**”.

**RATIONALE:** The House Sponsor of cross file HB 265 stated during the hearing that the Senate had objected to the inclusion of “limited licensees” in last year’s bills (HB 393 and SB 334), and that limited licensees have been excluded in HB 265 (and SB 456). In fact, limited licensees are still included under SB 456. The definition of a “license” under the Dentistry Act is in Section 4-101 (h)(1) and (2) and (j)(1) and (2) which read as follows:

“(h) (1) “License” means, unless the context requires otherwise, a license issued by the Board to:

(i) Practice dentistry; or

(ii) Practice dental hygiene.

(2) “License” includes, unless the context requires otherwise:

(i) A general license to practice dentistry;

(ii) A limited license to practice dentistry;

(iii) A teacher’s license to practice dentistry;

(iv) A general license to practice dental hygiene;

(v) A teacher’s license to practice dental hygiene;

(vi) A retired volunteer dentist’s license to practice dentistry;

(vii) A retired volunteer dental hygienist’s license to practice dental hygiene;

(viii) A volunteer dentist’s license to practice dentistry;

(ix) A volunteer dental hygienist’s license to practice dental hygiene;

- (x) A temporary volunteer dentist's license to practice dentistry; and
- (xi) A temporary volunteer dental hygienist's license to practice dental hygiene.

(i) (1) "Licensed dental hygienist" means, unless the context requires otherwise, a dental hygienist who is licensed by the Board to practice dental hygiene.

(2) "Licensed dental hygienist" includes, unless the context requires otherwise, a holder of:

- (i) A general license to practice dental hygiene;
- (ii) A teacher's license to practice dental hygiene;
- (iii) A retired volunteer dental hygienist's license to practice dental hygiene;
- (iv) A volunteer dental hygienist's license to practice dental hygiene; or
- (v) A temporary volunteer dental hygienist's license to practice dental hygiene.

(j) (1) "Licensed dentist" means, unless the context requires otherwise, a dentist who is licensed by the Board to practice dentistry.

(2) "Licensed dentist" includes, unless the context requires otherwise, a holder of:

- (i) A general license to practice dentistry;
- (ii) A limited license to practice dentistry;
- (iii) A teacher's license to practice dentistry;
- (iv) A retired volunteer dentist's license to practice dentistry;
- (v) A volunteer dentist's license to practice dentistry; or
- (vi) A temporary volunteer dentist's license to practice dentistry."

Clearly to have SB 456 exclude limited licensees , it must limit its provisions to holders of a general license to practice dentistry and holders of a general license to practice dental hygiene.

**AMENDMENT NO. 2:** On page 2 in line 7 strike "**OR PART TIME**" and after "or" insert "**FULL TIME OR PART TIME AS A**".

**RATIONALE:** The vast majority of the testimony at the hearing in the House on HB 265 supporting the inclusion of "part time" licensees as eligible applicants for the Dent-Care Grant Program was given by, or concerned dental hygienists. Only a small part of the proponent testimony referenced dentists, and none of the witnesses were dentists asking to be allowed to participate on a part time basis. However, there were dental hygienists who testified about working part time, and how they believed they would benefit if the bill were to be passed. This amendment would open the Program to dental hygienists with a general license who are employed part time to participate in the program, but would still require that dentist applicants be employed full time.

Submitted by Daniel T. Doherty, Jr.  
February 10, 2025

**2025 SB 456.pdf**

Uploaded by: Thomas a'Becket

Position: FWA

SB 456 Qualifications for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on the Use of On-line Credentialing

FAVORABLE with Amendments

February 10, 2025

Submitted by Dr Thomas R a'Becket Maryland State Dental Association  
Legislative Chair and Past President Maryland State Dental Association

The overall intent of the legislation continues a program that is achieving some success despite lacking the necessary funding to reach its full potential.

The language regarding the definition of licensure is of concern, the broad term LICENSE would mean every license category as eligible when in fact the proper language should be "a general license to practice dentistry or dental hygiene" so that limited license holders who are completing their training as an internationally trained dentists looking to complete the requirements to be eligible for a GENERAL LICENSE would not be eligible. In my opinion the dentists' slots should remain FULL TIME for the 3-year commitment, to motivate those dentists to establish roots in the community, treating patients and making it their long term dental home. There is more than a sufficient pool of dentists applying for this program as only 8 funded spots were available with 34 applicants. The loan forgiveness can make a large impact on the average \$300,000-400,000 student loan debt. The PART TIME status for the Dental Hygienist appears to be a reasonable request as over 90% are female and would like a work/family balance according to their prior testimony and the magnitude of student debt is much lower as the program costs range from \$22,000 to 30,000.

I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT with the amendments to hold a general license in dentistry or dental hygiene and consideration for PART TIME for Dental Hygienists. Thank You



**SB 456 - MIA - LOI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Marie Grant

Position: INFO



WES MOORE  
Governor

ARUNA MILLER  
Lt. Governor



MARIE GRANT  
Acting Commissioner

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**Date:** February 12, 2025

**Bill # / Title:** Senate Bill 456 - Dental Services - Qualification for Maryland Dent-Care Program and Study on Use of Dental Online Credentialing

**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Position:** Letter of Information

The Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide information regarding Senate Bill 456.

Senate Bill 456 seeks to alter the eligibility criteria for Higher Education Loan Assistance Grants under the Maryland Dent-Care program to include dentists and dental hygienists who are employed part time. The bill also requires the MIA to study whether dental insurance carriers are using an online credentialing system to process uniform credentialing forms and to report its findings, including any recommendations to expand utilization of an online credentialing system, to the General Assembly by December 1, 2025.

The MIA welcomes the opportunity to examine the utilization of online credentialing systems by dental insurance carriers to process uniform credentialing forms. However, the Agency respectfully proposes that the flexibility of the study's execution would be enhanced if Section 2's mandatory language were omitted, thereby granting the Agency the ability to undertake the study through a legislative request and optimizing resource allocation for this initiative.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of information. The MIA is available to provide additional information and assistance to the committee.