



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: Senate Bill (SB) 988 – Dental Services – Dental Hygienists in Schools and School-Based Health Centers and the Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children’s Oral Health Through School-Based Programs – Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of information regarding Senate Bill (SB) 988 – Dental Services – Dental Hygienists in Schools and School-Based Health Centers and the Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children’s Oral Health Through School-Based Programs. SB 988 establishes the Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children’s Oral Health (the Collaborative) to study and make recommendations to enhance school-based dental programs.

The Department would like to provide information about the current status of oral health care in Maryland’s School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs). The Standards for SBHCs in the Maryland School-Based Health Center Program outline the minimum requirements for SBHCs seeking and maintaining approval from the Department’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau.<sup>1</sup> Oral health is classified as a specialized or expanded service, which *may* be offered based on the needs of the school, feasibility, and the expertise of the care team. Currently, fewer than 30% of Maryland’s 89 approved SBHCs offer this expanded service. There is no specific requirement in the Standards regarding whether the staff providing these services should be a dentist or a dental hygienist.

The Department supports the Collaborative’s goal of studying and recommending ways to improve the oral health of children in Maryland through school-based dental programs. However, the Department must also acknowledge the anticipated fiscal and operational impact of participating in, and providing staff for, the Collaborative. The Department requires additional personnel to oversee the development and management of the Collaborative, and to ensure the overall successful implementation of this bill. This would include implementing, coordinating, staffing, and managing the Collaborative activities; providing background research and data to the Collaborative; and managing the development and submission of the required reports. The

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<sup>1</sup> Standards for School-Based Health Centers in the Maryland School-Based Health Center Program, January 2025, <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/mch/MD-SBHC-Program/Documents/Maryland%20SBHC%20Program%20Standards%202025.pdf>

responsibilities outlined in the bill cannot be accommodated with the Department's current staffing levels.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary