

## **SB 492 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Amanda Stephenson

Position: FAV



## Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the Senate Finance Committee

Chair: Senator Pamela Beidle

February 11, 2025

Senate Bill 492: Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage - Establishment

### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, Senator McKay, and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 492: Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage – Establishment

Oral health is a critical component of overall well-being. Oral health is often a “warning sign” for serious diseases such as cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and osteoporosis (Altema-Johnson, p.5). Thus, access to quality and routine dental care is an important step in improving health for Marylanders. Dental hygienists make up an increasingly significant portion of the dental workforce with their employment expected to grow 9 percent by 2033 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). Despite this growth, 74% of Maryland dental hygienists practice in only 8 counties, mostly urban (Altema-Johnson, p.19).

This bill will study the shortage of dental hygienists in Maryland and assess solutions regarding their recruitment, retention, and education. This is very important for rural communities as 67% of rural areas are designated as Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (Institute for Oral Health, 2024). Moreover, children living in Maryland stand to benefit substantially from the bill, especially children living in Maryland’s most rural regions. For example, the Office of Oral Health found the highest rates of dental decay and urgent dental care needed, 47% and 16% respectively, in Maryland’s western region (Children’s Oral Health Survey, 2022-2023).

The Maryland Rural Health Association believes in accessible and high-quality dental care. We believe that Senate Bill 429 is important to support the dental health and well-being of rural Marylanders. We urge the committee to support SB 492.

*On behalf of the Maryland Rural Health Association,  
Jonathan Dayton, MS, NREMT, CNE, Executive Director  
[jdayton@mdruralhealth.org](mailto:jdayton@mdruralhealth.org)*

Altema-Johnson, D. (2010). The Burden of Oral Diseases in Maryland. Maryland Department of Health, Office of Oral Health. <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/oralhealth/Documents/Burden2010.pdf>

Institute for Oral Health (2024). New Report: Rural Populations Have Worse Oral Health Care Access, Utilization, and Outcomes Compared to Urban Areas”. <https://www.carequest.org/about/press-release/new-report-rural-populations-have-worse-oral-health-care-access-utilization-and>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023). Occupational Outlook Handbook: Dental Hygienists. United States Department of Labor. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm>

Office of Oral Health (2023). 2022-2023 Children’s Oral Health Survey. Maryland Department of Health. <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/oralhealth/Documents/SchoolSurveySummary2023.pdf>

P.O. Box 3128 • LaVale, Maryland 21504

# **SB 492\_CHW Coalition\_Favorable\_FIN.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ashley Woolard

Position: FAV



<https://bit.ly/CHW-MD>  
TELEPHONE: (410) 625-9409  
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## **SB 492**

### **Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage - Establishment Hearing of the Senate Finance Committee**

**February 11, 2025**

**1:00 PM**

### **FAVORABLE**

The **Community Health Workers Empowerment Coalition of Maryland (CHWEC-MD)** is a coalition of CHWs and those who train, educate, support, and employ them across the state of Maryland. Our collective goals are to 1) reduce disparities in healthcare access and outcomes for Marylanders by expanding access to CHWs, 2) ensure that the voices of Maryland's CHWs are represented in the creation of laws and policies that impact the profession, and 3) advocate with CHWs for solutions that address systemic inequities that they experience in the field, including a lack of reimbursement for their services. We stand in **strong support of SB 492**, which would establish the Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage.

**The lack of dental hygienists in Maryland directly impacts access to dental care for patients and is a barrier to improving oral health.** When patients cannot access preventative dental care in the community, they run the risk of experiencing cavities, needing surgical interventions such as a root canal or tooth extraction, and experiencing chronic pain. Further, patients may seek care in emergency rooms to address pain, impacting the capacity of our ERs to meet emergency needs. Maryland must develop a plan and take significant steps towards addressing the workforce shortage.

**SB 492 would not only require stakeholders to study the workforce shortage for dental hygienists, but would also task the Commission with determining how to better integrate community health workers in dental settings to address gaps in continuity of care and patient education.** A CHW is a frontline public health worker that is a trusted member of their community with a deep understanding of the barriers to attaining good health that their community faces. They often share similar lived experiences with the communities they serve, which puts them in the position to be a connection between healthcare providers and the community. They not only provide education and information to patients on health, but they also help keep patients connected to care by addressing social determinants of health like access to food, transportation, and housing. In dental settings in particular, CHWs can provide education

to patients on how to achieve good oral health through dental hygiene practices and dietary changes that help prevent cavities and dental diseases.

Thank you for your consideration, and we respectfully urge this Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for **SB 492**. Should you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Ashley Woolard at [woolarda@publicjustice.org](mailto:woolarda@publicjustice.org), or call 410-625-9409 ext. 224.

# **SB492 - MDHA - Testimony in Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Caitlin McDonough

Position: FAV



The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

INFORMATIONAL LETTER  
SENATE BILL 492 – MARYLAND COMMISSION TO STUDY THE DENTAL HYGIENIST  
SHORTAGE

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Dental Hygienists Association (MDHA) is the professional association for dental hygienists providing services in Maryland. As an organization, MDHA seeks 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 submit testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 492 to establish a comprehensive Commission to develop recommendations to address the dental hygienist workforce shortage. MDHA welcomes the opportunity for a representative from our membership to serve on the proposed Commission and believes it is an essential step to coordinate with key stakeholders to develop comprehensive plan to address this shortage that affects our profession and our patients.

As proposed, SB492 gives the Commission flexibility to delve into a variety of topics impacting the dental hygiene profession and the delivery of preventative oral health services in the State, including issues that MDHA has advocated for in previous years like expansion of scope of practice, establishment of mid-level providers, direct reimbursement, barriers to education and barriers to serving in public health settings. The Commission will allow the members to delve into the nuance of all these issues and develop comprehensive and practical recommendations to address the shortage, resulting in improved access to effective and affordable oral health care.

MDHA thanks the sponsor and the Committee for the opportunity to submit these comments and participate in any subsequent legislative work on this important and impactful matter. MDHA urges a favorable report on SB492.

# **SB0492\_FAV\_MACHC\_Comm. Study Dental Hygienist Shor**

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV





Senate Finance Committee

February 11, 2025

Senate Bill 492 – *Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage – Establishment*  
**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 492.

Workforce shortages in the health care environment have been the subject of discussion by the General Assembly and the Administration for a number of years. However, there has not been as focused an attention on workforce shortages for oral health practitioners. Oral health is an essential component of ensuring the overall health of Marylanders. In recognition of the importance of oral health, Maryland has enacted a number of initiatives to enhance coverage for and access to dental services. However, access to oral health care can only be accomplished if there is a sufficient workforce to provide the services. In the medically underserved areas that are served by federally qualified health centers, the current workforce shortage is particularly challenging. Senate Bill 492 proposes to establish a Commission to study the dental hygienist shortage. The Commission composition reflects all the relevant stakeholders necessary to evaluate the shortage and develop meaningful and effective recommendations. MACHC urges a favorable report.

**For more information call:**

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

# **SB0492\_MACC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FAV

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**Senate Finance Committee**

February 11, 2025

**SB 492 - Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage - Establishment**

**Position: Favorable**

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **SB 492**, which establishes the Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage. This bill takes a critical step toward assessing the workforce gap, developing targeted recruitment and retention strategies, and expanding access to dental hygiene education opportunities across the state.

Community colleges play a vital role in training Maryland's healthcare workforce, including dental hygienists. As the primary providers of dental hygiene education in Maryland, community colleges are well-positioned to contribute to solutions that strengthen the pipeline of qualified professionals. By bringing together stakeholders from higher education, workforce development, public health, and the dental industry, this Commission will help identify strategies to support dental hygiene students, enhance workforce pathways, and ensure that all regions of the state have access to quality oral healthcare.

MACC especially appreciates the inclusion of two community college representatives on the Commission. This recognition underscores community colleges' essential role in educating Maryland's dental hygiene workforce, particularly in addressing regional workforce shortages. MACC looks forward to working collaboratively with the Commission to explore ways to expand dental hygiene education, strengthen student support services, and create clearer pathways for dental assistants and community health workers to advance into the profession. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE vote on **SB 492**.

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

# **SB 492 - Maryland Commission to Study the Dental H**

Uploaded by: Mark Woodard

Position: FAV



*Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes*

**Testimony for Senate Bill 492**

**Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage - Establishment**

TO: Hon. Pamela Beidle, Chair, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: February 11, 2025

POSITION: Support

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports Senate Bill 492.**

This bill establishes a Commission to assess the dental hygienist shortage in the State and the impact of the shortage of oral health in rural, suburban, and urban communities and study and make recommendations regarding methods to address it. This includes improving the recruitment and retention of dental hygienists in private practice, community health centers, and public health settings at the statewide level; developing region-specific recruitment and retention strategies for dental hygienists in rural, suburban, and urban areas of the State; expanding dental hygiene education opportunities at institutions of higher education; increasing retention of dental hygiene students through educational support and wraparound services; and supporting dental assistants and community health workers in accessing dental hygiene educational opportunities.

Dental hygienists are an entry level occupation and there is a clear need to expand that part of Maryland's healthcare workforce. Establishing this commission could be an important step in addressing that issue by identifying potential talent pools that can be targeted through rigorous recruiting efforts, scholarships, stipends, or perhaps other forms of assistance. There are many Marylanders, especially in Baltimore City, that are looking for quality careers but are not aware of potential opportunities. This bill is an important step in the right direction by examining the issue properly so that informed solutions can be proposed.

**For these reasons, JOTF supports Senate Bill 492 and urges a favorable report.**

**For more information, contact:**

Mark Woodard /Public Policy Advocate / [Mark@jotf.org](mailto:Mark@jotf.org)

# **2025 MCHS SB 492 Senate Side.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV



## Maryland Community Health System

**Committee:** Senate Finance Committee

**Bill:** Senate Bill 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage  
- Establishment

**Hearing Date:** February 11, 2025

**Position:** Support

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Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) strongly supports *Senate Bill 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage*. The bill establishes a two-year Commission to study and make recommendations to address Maryland’s dental hygienist shortage.

### **Urgent Need for More Dental Hygienists 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>i</sup>**

## **Developing a Systemic Approach to Addressing the Dental Hygienist Shortage**

Maryland has a successful track record of addressing health professional shortages through a collaborative, structured approach. Maryland has focused efforts on addressing shortages in nurses (SB 696 in 2022), primary care (SB 734 in 2022), and dentists (SB 100 in 2021).

By establishing the Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage, the legislation convenes an interdisciplinary group to make recommendation on how Maryland can support dental hygiene education programs at community college programs and the University of Maryland Baltimore, recruitment and retention efforts across different regions of Maryland, and dental assistants and community health workers interested in pursuing the dental hygienist educational pathway.

## **Conclusion**

MCHS strongly supports this bill because Maryland needs a systemic approach to addressing the dental hygienist shortage. 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)



# **SB0492\_MACC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

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**Senate Finance Committee**

February 11, 2025

**SB 492 - Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage - Establishment**

**Position: Favorable**

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

## **SB492.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

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



Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Executive Nominations Committee

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

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

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

**Senate Bill 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage – Establishment**

January 22, 2025

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chairman Hayes, and Members of the Committee,

Senate Bill 492 establishes a commission to study the dental hygienist shortage in Maryland. The commission will support the State's efforts to improve Marylanders oral health. The Commission is supposed to submit an interim report by December 1, 2025, with a final report and recommendations by December 1, 2026 to the General Assembly, Maryland Department of Health, and the Higher Education Commission.

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

# **Talking Points for Senator McKay on SB 492 - Commi**

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

## **Talking Points for Senator McKay's Testimony on SB 462**

### **– Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage – Establishment**

- Thank you for the opportunity to bring SB 462 to the Committee today.
- This bill is the next step in my commitment to increasing access to dental care for all Marylanders.
- In 2022, Delegate Bonnie Cullison and I sponsored HB 6. This groundbreaking bill provided for dental coverage for almost 800,000 adults enrolled in Medicaid. On the Senate side, Senate Bill 150, was sponsored by Senator Malcolm Augustine and Senator Guy Guzzone.
- Since the bill was implemented in 2023, about 200,000 adults have obtain dental services using their Medicaid coverage. Some people had not seen a dentist for decades because of their lack of coverage. Now they have access to preventative services, such as cleanings, and restorative services, such as fillings. These services will keep them healthier overall and out of our emergency rooms.
- Now, we need to turn our attention to ensuring we have enough dental providers to serve our communities. Dental hygienists are a critical part of our dental workforce, yet I have heard reports that of the extreme difficulty in filling dental hygienist positions in my district, and I expect that you have heard these same reports in your district as well.
- Our Maryland experience with the dental hygienists reflects the national trend. According to the Health Policy Institute, 92% of dental practices have reported that it had been extremely or very challenging when recruiting dental hygienists.<sup>1</sup>
- SB 462 establishes the Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage. I did not craft this bill from scratch. I looked at the work undertaken by Chair Beidle with SB 440 in 2022, which established the Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis in Maryland. As a result of the Commission's work, Maryland has made progress, particularly in nursing, with innovative programs. For example, a Commission recommendation led to Senator Lam's SB 718 from last session to create a wrap-around services for nursing students in community colleges under the Pathways to Nursing Program.
- Under SB 462, the Commission includes educators, community colleges, the University of Maryland Baltimore, dental hygienists, dentists, and public health policy-makers. The Commission is charged with developing recommendations in several key areas:

- The recruitment and retention of dental hygienists across different regions of Maryland;
- How we can support our dental hygiene education programs to meet the growing need for dental hygienists;
- How we can support dental assistants and community health workers to enter dental hygienist programs and be successful.

Thank you for this Committee's long history of supporting dental access in Maryland. I ask for a favorable vote on SB 362 and look forward to working with the Committee.

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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)

# **2025 MASBHC SB 492 Senate Side.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV





**Committee:** Senate Finance Committee

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage

**Hearing Date:** February 11, 2025

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care (MASBHC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage*. The bill will establish the two-year Commission to study and develop recommendations to Maryland policy-makers on addressing the chronic shortage of dental hygienists.

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, particularly for dental hygienists.

The dental hygienist shortage is particularly severe. Nationally, nearly 80% of practices dental hygienists reported that they did not have enough applications when recruiting dental hygienists.<sup>i</sup> We need a systemic assessment of the dental hygienist shortage in Maryland and the development of state-based strategies. While the Maryland Oral Health Task Force recently completed a report, most recommendations focused on dentists. Maryland would benefit from following Virginia’s pathway. The Virginia Healthcare Workforce Data Center produces an annual report on the dental hygienist shortage: <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/media/dhpweb/docs/hwdc/dentistry/0402DentalHygienists2023.pdf>

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

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<sup>i</sup> [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental\\_workforce\\_shortages\\_labor\\_market.pdf?rev=e6025d77df184e6c95dc7cefde4adee3&hash=225FCBBCCB67174AAFC760FE2287322D](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental_workforce_shortages_labor_market.pdf?rev=e6025d77df184e6c95dc7cefde4adee3&hash=225FCBBCCB67174AAFC760FE2287322D)

## **2025 MCHS SB 492 Senate Side.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



## Maryland Community Health System

**Committee:** Senate Finance Committee

**Bill:** Senate Bill 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage  
- Establishment

**Hearing Date:** February 11, 2025

**Position:** Support

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Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) strongly supports *Senate Bill 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage*. The bill establishes a two-year Commission to study and make recommendations to address Maryland’s dental hygienist shortage.

### **Urgent Need for More Dental Hygienists 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>i</sup>**

## **Developing a Systemic Approach to Addressing the Dental Hygienist Shortage**

Maryland has a successful track record of addressing health professional shortages through a collaborative, structured approach. Maryland has focused efforts on addressing shortages in nurses (SB 696 in 2022), primary care (SB 734 in 2022), and dentists (SB 100 in 2021).

By establishing the Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage, the legislation convenes an interdisciplinary group to make recommendation on how Maryland can support dental hygiene education programs at community college programs and the University of Maryland Baltimore, recruitment and retention efforts across different regions of Maryland, and dental assistants and community health workers interested in pursuing the dental hygienist educational pathway.

## **Conclusion**

MCHS strongly supports this bill because Maryland needs a systemic approach to addressing the dental hygienist shortage. 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)

# **2025 MDAC SB 492 Senate Side.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



10015 Old Columbia Road, Suite B-215  
Columbia, Maryland 21046  
[www.mdac.us](http://www.mdac.us)

**Committee:** Senate Finance

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage

**Hearing Date:** February 11, 2025

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Dental Action Coalition strongly supports *Senate Bill 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage – Establishment*. The bill establishes a two-year commission to develop recommendations for Maryland to address the dental hygienist shortage.

### **The Need for A Systemic Solution to the Dental Hygienist Shortage**

According to the Health Policy Institute (American Dental Association) latest quarterly report, 92% of dental practices nationwide reporting that it had been extremely or very challenging when recruiting dental hygienists.<sup>i</sup> As a result, dental providers have reduced capacity to see patients, leading to longer wait times for services.<sup>ii</sup>

Maryland is facing a similar challenge. With the COVID pandemic, there has been an exodus of dental hygienists from the field. There are simply not enough new graduates to fill vacancies, leaving our dental providers to struggle in recruiting dental hygienists.

In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly enacted landmark legislation to establish dental coverage for adults enrolled in Medicaid with HB 6/SB 150 (Delegates Cullison and McKay/Senators Augustine and Guzzone). Since the inception of the program, over 200,000 adults in Medicaid have been able to access dental services across Maryland. As more people seek dental services, we have seen the need for more dentists and dental hygienists. Nearly all of Maryland's jurisdictions have a dental professional shortage, according to the federal Health Services and Research Administration.<sup>iii</sup>

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

## **Roadmap to Addressing the Dental Hygienist Shortage**

Maryland policy-makers need to know where to start in addressing the dental hygienist shortage. The roadmap can be developed by the Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage. The legislation will advance Maryland's efforts by:

- Establishing a two-year Commission with representatives from the public health, private practice, and education sectors across the State.
- Following a similar roadmap for studying solutions to the nursing shortage. Maryland launched a multi-faceted strategy to address the nursing shortage based on findings from the Maryland's Commission to Study the Health Care Workforce Crisis. The Commission was established through legislation in 2022 (SB 440/HB 625 – Senator Pam Beidle/Delegate Ariana Kelly).
- Studying key policy questions, including:
  - ✓ How can Maryland recruit and retain dental hygienists in different practice settings?
  - ✓ How can Maryland support our dental hygiene education programs in meeting the need for more dental hygienists?
  - ✓ How can Maryland support dental hygiene students successfully complete their programs? Maryland's Pathways to Nursing Program may offer a model.
  - ✓ Is there opportunity to increase the number of dental hygienists by supporting dental assistants and community health workers in seeking educational opportunities?

## **Commission Can Build upon Foundational Resources**

The Commission will have foundational resources to help jump start its work, including:

- Virginia's Healthcare Workforce Data Center prepares annual survey reports on the dental hygienist shortage.<sup>iv</sup> The assessment contains elements for Maryland to consider replicating;
- The Maryland Coalition for Allied Dental Education has been laying groundwork by surveying community health centers, dental providers and other stakeholders on factors impacting the dental hygienist shortage; and
- The American Dental Association/Health Policy Institute's comprehensive report on the dental hygienist shortage nationwide.<sup>v</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition asks for a favorable report. This legislation offers a path forward in addressing the dental hygienist shortage and improving access to dental services in Maryland. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).

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

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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://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=169&event\\_id=16330&meta\\_id=186515](https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&event_id=16330&meta_id=186515)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/hpsa-find>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/media/dhpweb/docs/hwdc/dentistry/0402DentalHygienists2023.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental\\_workforce\\_shortages\\_labor\\_market.pdf?rev=e6025d77df184e6c95dc7cefde4adee3&hash=225FCBBCCB67174AAFC760FE2287322D](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental_workforce_shortages_labor_market.pdf?rev=e6025d77df184e6c95dc7cefde4adee3&hash=225FCBBCCB67174AAFC760FE2287322D)



## **SB0492\_ Written Testimony (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Stella Hong

Position: FAV

Stella Hong

Committee: Finance

Committee Bill Number: SENATE BILL 492: Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage - Establishment

Date: February 11th, 2025

Position: Support

My name is Stella Hong, and I am a senior at Johns Hopkins University studying Biology. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 492, which establishes a critical commission to address Maryland's dental hygienist shortage. As the bill states, its core purpose is "to support the State's efforts to improve the oral health of Marylanders by ensuring the stability and sustainability of the State's dental hygiene workforce."

I volunteer at the National Museum of Dentistry, where we frequently get tour groups of elementary, middle, and high school students. At our dental hygiene exhibit, we ask students if they know the names and purposes of the dental health professionals. While the students frequently tell me about dentists and dental assistants, it is often the case where they don't know what the role hygienists play in getting their teeth cleaned. The museum staff try to explain the history behind the rise of dental hygienists, as well as educate students on the importance of dental hygienists.

This legislation brings together key stakeholders from education, healthcare, and community organizations. The commission's diverse membership, including representatives from "rural community college[s] with a dental hygiene program" and "federally qualified health center[s]," ensures that all perspectives and challenges, including those of underserved communities, will be considered.

The bill's mandate to "assess the dental hygienist shortage in the State and the impact of the shortage on oral health in rural, suburban, and urban communities" is particularly important. By requiring "region-specific recruitment and retention strategies," the commission will address the unique challenges faced by different areas of Maryland.

According to the Maryland Public Health Dental Hygiene Act: An Impact Study, the recommendations made by public health facilities include "increased value placed on dental hygienists by dentists, administrators, and the general public," as well as increased sense of value felt by dental hygienists." SB0492 helps achieve both these goals.

The bill's requirement for both interim and final reports ensures accountability and timely action. With specific deadlines of "December 1, 2025" for the interim report and "December 1, 2026" for the final report, the commission will maintain focus on delivering actionable solutions.

I thank the committee for its leadership on this issue and urge you for a favorable report on SB0492.

Sincerely,  
Stella Hong

Johns Hopkins University  
stellahong0128@gmail.com

# **Final SB 492 support with amendments pdf.pdf**

Uploaded by: Charles Doring

Position: FWA

SB 492, Support with Amendments

Charles Doring DDS

Written Testimony in Support of SB 492 with Amendments

From Charles A. Doring DDS

A Maryland Healthy Smiles (Dental Medicaid) Provider

Submitted 2/7/2025 for hearing 2/11/2025

Dear Members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide oral and written testimony in support of, with amendments, to SB 492. I am a general dentist in a small group practice in Rockville that employs 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 Dean's Faculty member at our University of Maryland School of Dentistry. I was a member of the 2022 Maryland Legislative Oral Health Care Task Force charged with finding solutions to dental health care disparities. I am speaking to you as an individual and Dental Medicaid provider today.

I personally, along with many other members of the Maryland State Dental Association, have challenges finding qualified Certified Dental Assistants (CDA), registered Dental Radiation Technologists (DRT), and Registered Dental Hygienists (RDH). Without a full compliment of dental team members, dental offices are unable to schedule to capacity to meet the dental needs of the citizens of Maryland in a timely fashion. The shortage was made worse during the COVID-19 pandemic when many dental team members decided not to return to work. This workforce shortage continues today. According to the American Dental Association Health Policy Institute October 2022 document entitled:

"Dental Workforce Shortages: Data to Navigate Today's Labor Market"

The dental sector is facing a serious workforce shortage. Vacant positions in dental assisting and dental hygiene have reduced dental practice capacity by an estimated 10% nationally. One in three dentists who do not have full appointment schedules indicate that trouble filling staffing positions is a contributing factor. Workforce shortages were initially attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. We now know that is just part of the story. Enrollment in dental assisting programs has been trending downward since 2015, and the pandemic had a negative impact on dental hygiene program enrollment. While there has been some recovery of enrollment in dental hygiene programs, data suggest that dental assisting program enrollment will not rebound in the near future. As a result, workforce shortages are likely to remain an issue for years to come.

While I appreciate the bill addressing the RDH shortage, the commission should evaluate and come up with recommendations to solve the entire dental team workforce problem so dentistry can provide more timely care by qualified licensed or certified individuals. This should include consideration of Maryland moving forward with education programs for Community Dental Health Care Coordinators (CDHC) and Expanded Function Dental Assistants (EFDA).

For the reasons stated above, I ask for a favorable report on SB 492 with the proposed amendments attached.

**Amendments to SB 492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental  
Hygienist Shortage – Establishment**  
*Respectfully Submitted by Dr. Charles Doring*

**Amendment No. 1:** On page 1, lines 2,3,4,8, 11 and on page 3, line 6 strike “**hygienist**” and substitute “**auxiliary**”.

Requested by  
Dr. Charles Doring  
February 7, 2025

# **MD SB492 Testimony FINAL.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matthew Rossetto

Position: INFO

February 7, 2025

Sen. Pam Beidle  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Informational Testimony on SB492, Establishing the Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

Thank you for inviting the American Dental Association to provide testimony on SB492, which would establish a state commission to identify ways Maryland can ease its shortage of dental hygienists.

Although it is likely of cold comfort, your colleagues in virtually every other state are in pursuit of solutions to the same question. These workforce challenges did not arise overnight, nor will they disappear with the flip of a switch. The causes of the dental hygienist shortage are varied, and the ADA Health Policy Institute has conducted significant research and polling over the last several years to help identify these causes and determine what steps are necessary to combat them.

From 2022 to 2023, there was a **6.3% drop** in the number of hygienists working in Maryland, leaving the total number at 3,590. That number is below 2020, and represents a decline of 530 from your peak number of hygienists in 2021. The median hourly wage for a hygienist is approximately **\$49/hour**, down from a peak of \$54/hour in 2021. These are highly skilled, highly sought after, well-paid jobs, particularly in a state like Maryland whose proximity to the nation's capital and large number of federal employees with benefit coverage make the practice of dentistry attractive.

Despite this, data continues to indicate that dentists have difficulty recruiting hygienists. Results from HPI's Q4 2024 Economic Outlook Survey showed that 90.1% of dentist respondents found recruiting a hygienist to be "very" or "extremely" challenging. Nonetheless, they are looking, and actively adding staff. Over half of those surveyed indicated that they added staff to their practices in 2024. 62% cited staffing shortages, recruitment, and retention as a top concern heading in to 2025.

A 2022 survey<sup>1</sup> conducted by HPI along with partners at the American Dental Hygienists Association, the Dental Assisting National Board, and others, came to the following conclusions on the origins of the shortage:

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<sup>1</sup> ADA Health Policy Institute in collaboration with American Dental Assistants Association, American Dental Hygienists' Association, Dental Assisting National Board, and IgniteDA. Dental workforce shortages: Data to navigate today's labor



“Greater outflows: Due to a multi-year partnership between the ADA and ADHA, we know that fewer than half of dental hygienists who left employment early in the COVID-19 pandemic returned to the workforce in 2021. Further, an estimated 3.75% of dental hygienists voluntarily left the workforce in 2021, including 1.6% who permanently left due to retirement or a career change. The most common reasons cited for not returning to work – aside from “waiting until the COVID-19 pandemic is under control” – included concerns about workplace safety and insufficient childcare.

Slower inflows: Enrollment in dental hygiene and dental assisting programs declined from pre-pandemic levels in 2021-22, with a downward trend in accredited dental assisting programs that started prior to the pandemic. There was about a 7% drop in first-year enrollment in dental hygiene programs nationwide in the 2020-21 academic year, which was the first cohort to enroll since the start of the pandemic. That drop is due in part to more programs not enrolling first year classes that year because of the pandemic. There was about a 4% drop in the number of graduates in 2020 compared to 2019. The most recent data indicate that both first-year enrollment and graduates are rebounding in dental hygiene. However, enrollment declines in dental assisting seem to be part of a long-term downward trend, as is the number of accredited dental assisting programs in operation.”

As in any job, satisfaction levels are a large determinant of how long an employee stays with a particular employer. A survey<sup>2</sup> released in January of this year by SUNY-Albany and HPI finds that over 80% of hygienists and assistants were satisfied with their jobs overall.

The top factors for job satisfaction were positive work-life balance, positive workplace culture, ability to improve patient oral health, and fair pay. By contrast, those dissatisfied listed negative workplace culture, insufficient pay, overwork, and inadequate benefits as their chief complaints.

This and other data we provide is designed to provide insight into why current conditions exist. While some of this is addressable only by employers, there are other steps that policymakers can take to better utilize the existing workforce, and the ADA is leading that charge.

This past October, the ADA House of Delegates adopted three new policies on workforce, designed to encourage states to pursue solutions that better utilize existing providers.

- **Resolution 401H-2024—Increasing Allied Personnel in the Workforce:**

Encourages the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) to align faculty-student ratios in allied dental programs with predoctoral dental education standards. This aims to address

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market. October 2022. Available from: [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/adaorganization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental\\_workforce\\_shortages\\_labor\\_market.pdf](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/adaorganization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental_workforce_shortages_labor_market.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Nozomi Sasaki, Jinman Pang, Simona Surdu, Rachel W Morrissey, Marko Vujicic, Jean Moore, Workplace factors associated with job satisfaction among dental hygienists and assistants in the United States, *Health Affairs Scholar*, Volume 3, Issue 1, January 2025, qxae147, <https://doi.org/10.1093/haschl/qxae147>

educator and hygienist shortages, reduce financial barriers, and ensure quality education for future dental professionals using language consistent with dental schools.

- **Resolution 513H-2024—Dental Students and Residents as Dental Hygienists:**  
Encourages states to adopt policies that would allow dental students, who have completed hygiene competencies and met state licensure requirements, to practice in supervised roles. This approach fosters greater access to care while reinforcing the critical contributions of hygienists.

- **Resolution 514H-2024—Internationally Trained Dentists as Dental Hygienists:**  
Encourages states to adopt policies allowing internationally trained dentists to practice as dental hygienists. Internationally trained dentists would need to pass U.S. board examinations to demonstrate competency before ADA would encourage states to support their licensure. This ensures patient care meets safety and quality standards.

Resolution 514 is particularly pertinent, as allowance of internationally trained dentists to perform hygiene services has gained momentum. Massachusetts recently enacted this legislation, and it is currently pending in Connecticut and Washington. So long as providers can prove that they have been in practice in their home country, and can pass the same hygiene licensing exams as everyone else, we believe that they should be allowed to perform hygiene services. Traditionally, internationally trained dentists must undergo US-based training on top of the education from their home country, as establishing curriculum equivalency is virtually impossible and dental education can vary wildly between countries. This is a long and expensive process. However, we believe their talents should be put to use, as many of them are already instructors in dental schools, but are otherwise unable to practice their trade. This helps bring additional providers into the workforce without compromising public safety.

Finally, other policies include steps that Maryland has already taken, including authorization of Expanded Function Dental Assistants (EFDA's). Several states have begun considering adding what are referred to as Oral Preventive Assistants, or OPA's, to their dental team. This person is an EFDA trained and certified specifically in supragingival scaling, which can help make an office more efficient, and free the other providers in the office to practice at the top of their scope.

There is no one step to solving this issue. It will take time, and the right combination of policies, to get the market back to where it needs to be. In the meantime, the ADA stands ready to assist this body and, if approved, this commission, with any requests it may have.

Marko Vujicic, Chief Economist for the Health Policy Institute ([vujicicm@ada.org](mailto:vujicicm@ada.org)) can provide further assistance should the commission require it.

Sen. Pam Beidle  
SB492  
Page 4

Sincerely,

Matt Rossetto  
Legislative Liaison, Federal & State Affairs  
[rossettom@ada.org](mailto:rossettom@ada.org)

MDR:ha:coo

cc: Marko Vujicic, PhD, Chief Economist, Health Policy Institute  
Krishna Aravamudhan, BDS, MS, Sr. Vice President, Practice Institute  
Dr. Hana Alberti, Vice President, Dental Practice  
Chad Olson, Senior Director, State Government Affairs

# **SB492-MDH - FIN - LOI (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: INFO



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

February 11, 2025

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

**RE: Senate Bill 0492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage - Establishment - Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this Letter of Information for Senate Bill 0492 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage - Establishment.

Senate Bill 492 (SB 492) will establish the Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage to support the State's efforts to improve the oral health of Marylanders by ensuring the stability and sustainability of the State's dental hygiene workforce. SB 492 also requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Secretary to appoint the chair and certain members to the Commission, and for MDH to provide staffing for the Commission. The bill also mandated the Commission to submit an interim report by December 1, 2025, and a final report by December 1, 2026, of its findings and recommendations to the Maryland Higher Education Commission, MDH, and the General Assembly. The deadlines for report submission are challenging as MDH anticipates a minimum of six months will be required to hire program staff, recruit Commission members, and establish the requirements related to the Commission's work prior to completing the interim report. MDH kindly requests a consideration on the reports submission deadlines.

The Office of Healthcare Access and Workforce Development within the Office of Population Health Improvement (OPHI) at MDH aims to improve the accessibility and quality of health care across Maryland by increasing the supply of health care providers across the state, especially in rural areas and areas considered to have health professional shortages and/or medically underserved areas/ populations. Current OPHI staffing levels cannot absorb the requirements of this bill. OPHI will require a new position of 1.0 FTE to satisfy the requirements of this bill including the anticipated coordination and staffing of the Commission's work; and the Department's expertise from the State Office of Rural Health, Primary Care Office (Health Professional Shortage Area designations); OPHI Office of Healthcare Access and Workforce Development; and State Office of Oral Health. The hiring of required staff and the appointment

of Commission members would make it challenging to complete an interim report by December 1, 2025, as these activities take a considerable amount of time.

Additionally, current provider data for dentists and dental hygienists is limited and would be requested from the Board of Dental Examiners. MDH will require the procurement of an external vendor to provide additional data needed to complete the mandated report requirements including data on actively practicing dental hygienists, practice site locations, number of hours providing direct patient services, and the current supply of dental hygienists. This additional data collection would require the procurement of a data specialist consultant.

MDH estimates a total cost of \$205,822 for FY26 and \$317,024 for FY27. This funding is not included in the Governor's FY26 allowance.

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".

Laura Herrera Scott, MD, MPH  
Secretary