
House Health and Government Operations Committee

March 4, 2025

HB 849 - Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage - Establishment

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **HB 849**, 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 **HB 849**.

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