



House Health and Government Operations Committee

March 4, 2025

House Bill 849 – *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 House Bill 849.

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. House Bill 849 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:**

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