



**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations

**Bill Number:** House Bill 849 – Maryland Commission to Study the Dental Hygienist Shortage

**Hearing Date:** March 4, 2025

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care (MASBHC) strongly supports *House Bill 849 – 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)