

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB771 (Harrison) Student Health – Program for Student Dental Health – Established –
FAVORABLE

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

- Dr. Naru Baliga- Pediatric Dentist since 2011.
- I am strongly in favor of this bill.
- I regularly see many kids who are in Elementary School who have moderate to severe or sometimes bombed out teeth. Usually when I see them at this stage , it is because their child is in pain now. Sometimes parents also confess that their child has missed school due to pain and now they couldn't ignore it any longer. By now I have accepted that sometimes parents do not necessarily feel motivated to take their child to a Dentist even when in pain. It has to be very disruptive and consistent or awake at night episode that makes them to bring in their child. By this time the treatment plan is not only extensive, comprehensive. Besides it takes a toll on their psychology and most often than not, it is usually a case for sedation or OR Full mouth Dental Rehabilitation. The expense for the Govt at this time is by far 100 times more than having to cover a simple restorative procedure. I would like all the counties in MD to mandate a dental exam as a necessity to enroll in Kindergarten. This way we are able to treat dental disease early costing Medicaid less than having to pay for more comprehensive treatment.

For the reasons stated above, I urge a **favorable report on HB771**.

Narayani Baliga, DMD 2007, residency
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