

HB 771 Favorable

Written Testimony in Support of HB 771

From Charles A. Doring DDS

A Maryland Healthy Smiles (Dental Medicaid) Provider

(Submitted 2/21/2025 for hearing 2/21/2025)

Dear Members of the House Ways & Means Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide oral & written testimony in support of HB 771. 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 a 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 to you today.

The Maryland Office of Oral Health (OOH) conducted a study entitled "Oral Health Survey of Maryland School Children 2022-2023. The study screened 4,950 children at 48 schools from 14 county school districts. The key findings included:

● **Dental Decay Experience:**

Overall, 43% of surveyed children had experienced dental decay.

Prevalence was slightly higher among third grade children (47%) compared to kindergarteners (37%)

Hispanic children had the highest prevalence of decay (58%)

Almost three in five children (59%) from the lowest economic group had dental decay experience

Children in Western region had the highest prevalence of decay (47%)

● **Untreated Dental Decay**

One in five (21%) children had untreated dental

Hispanic children had the highest prevalence of untreated decay (30%)

One in three children (33%) from the lowest economic group had untreated decay

Children in Western region had the highest untreated decay than those of other regions (27%)

The study further states:

"Almost one in three (30%) children needed early follow-up or urgent care regarding oral health" and further, "6% of the children needed urgent care because of pain or infection"

Obviously, current procedures to educate parents and screen pre-school & school age children is faltering as a significant number of children experience oral discomfort and missed school due to dental pain.

Among the conclusions of the OOH study was 1) Expansion of School-based Oral Health Programs and 2) State and local policymakers should enact comprehensive school oral health policies that promote oral health education, encourage healthy dietary habits, and support the establishment of school-based dental clinics. These policies can create environments conducive to maintaining optimal oral health and empower schools to play a more active role in promoting oral health among students.

Attached to this testimony is data from the American Dental Association Department of State Government Affairs that outlines what other states are doing to reduce the incidence of childhood dental decay via required dental examinations or oral health screenings of school children.

I have worked with Delegate Harrison on some amendments to the original bill that will best utilize the current efforts of the Maryland OOH and existing resources for Medicaid eligible families to locate dental homes. This will reduce fiscal impact for our Department of Education and school systems. Further, the amendments would focus screenings on newly enrolled school children. This will create focus on screening the most vulnerable younger children at risk for nursing bottle tooth decay while lowering the record keeping burden of school nurses.

For the above reasons, I ask you for a favorable report with Delegate Harrison's amendments on HB 771.

## STATES THAT REQUIRE DENTAL EXAMS/ORAL HEALTH SCREENINGS FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

STATE	DETAILS
<a href="#"><u>California</u></a>	<i>A pupil, while enrolled in kindergarten in a public school, or while enrolled in first grade in a public school if the pupil was not previously enrolled in kindergarten in a public school . . . shall present proof of having received an <b>oral health assessment</b> by a <b>licensed dentist, or other licensed or registered dental health professional operating within his or her scope of practice</b>, that was performed no earlier than 12 months before the date of the initial enrollment of the pupil.</i>
<a href="#"><u>Georgia</u></a>	<i>The [DPH] is authorized and directed, in cooperation with the State Board of Education, to promulgate rules and regulations to provide for a nutritional screening and eye, ear, and dental examinations for each student entering the first grade in the public schools of this state and at such other times as such rules and regulations shall provide. <b>See also</b>, Georgia DPH Form <a href="#"><u>Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening</u></a>: Your child's <b>doctor</b> is authorized to conduct all four screenings, as is your <b>local health department</b>. In addition,. . . the dental screening can be conducted by a Georgia licensed <b>dentist, dental hygienist, or a school registered nurse</b>; . .</i>
<a href="#"><u>Iowa</u></a>	<i>From the <a href="#"><u>Iowa Department of Health website</u></a>: All children newly enrolling in an Iowa elementary or high school are required to have a dental screening. The requirement applies to kindergarten and ninth grade students only. <b>A screening for kindergarten may be performed by a licensed dentist, dental hygienist, physician, nurse, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. A screening for ninth grade may be performed by a licensed dentist or dental hygienist only.</b></i>
<a href="#"><u>Illinois</u></a>	<i>In compliance with rules adopted by [the DPH] . . . all children in kindergarten and the second, sixth, and ninth grades of any public, private, or parochial school shall have a dental examination. Each of these children shall present proof of having been <b>examined by a dentist</b> in accordance with this Section and rules adopted under this Section before May 15th of the school year. . . . Licensed dentists shall perform all dental examinations and shall sign all report forms required. . .</i>
<a href="#"><u>Kansas</u></a>	<i>The boards of education of cities of the first and second class and school boards of school districts are hereby required to provide for free dental inspection annually for all children, except those who hold a certificate from a legally qualified dentist showing that this examination has been made within three months last past, attending such schools. . . [the school board] shall [designate a] <b>licensed dentist or dentists</b> to make such inspection . . . certificate of the result of such inspection . . . shall be furnished to the child examined. . .</i>

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<p><a href="#"><u>Kentucky</u></a></p>	<p>From the <a href="#"><u>Kentucky Department of Education website</u></a>: <i>Dental Screening/Exam -- Kentucky law requires proof of a dental screening or examination <b>by a dentist, dental hygienist, physician, registered nurse, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant</b> to be presented to the school no later than January 1 of the first year that a five (5) or six (6) year old child is enrolled in public school.</i></p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Nebraska</u></a></p>	<p><i>Every school district shall cause children under its jurisdiction to be separately and carefully inspected, except as otherwise provided in this section, to ascertain if a child is suffering from (1) defective sight or hearing, (2) dental defects, or (3) other conditions as prescribed by the [Nebraska DHHS]. . . . During each school year the school district shall provide the inspections required by section 79-248 for the children then in attendance. As children enter school during the year, such inspections shall be confirmed upon their entrance. <b>See also Nebraska Admin. Code 173 NAC 7</b>: Screening [including dental screening] is [to be] conducted by a licensed health care professional, as follows: a Nebraska-credentialed health care professional <b>registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, advanced practice registered nurse-nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or physician</b>, are authorized to perform health screening at school. Other licensed health professionals authorized to conduct specific screenings in addition to health professionals [previously] identified are: . . . <b>Dental Health: Dentists and dental hygienists.</b></i></p>
<p><a href="#"><u>New York</u></a></p>	<p>Students [are required] to furnish health certificates and dental health certificates. (1) A health certificate shall be furnished by each student in the public schools upon his or her entrance in such schools [as required by regulation]. . . provided that such regulations shall require such certificates at least twice during the elementary grades and twice in the secondary grades; [Additionally], (2) a dental health certificate shall be requested from each student. Each student is requested to furnish a dental health certificate at the same time that health certificates are required. An examination and dental health history of any child may be requested by the local school authorities at any time in their discretion to promote the educational interests of such child. Each certificate shall be signed by a <b>duly licensed dentist</b> . . .</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Oregon</u></a></p>	<p><i>[E]ach education provider shall require a student who is seven years of age or younger and who is beginning an educational program with the education provider for the first time to submit certification that the student received a dental screening within the previous 12 months. . . . "Dental screening" means a dental screening test to identify potential dental health problems that is conducted by: <b>a dentist . . . a dental hygienist . . . [a] health care practitioner who is acting in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Education; or . . . [a] person who: . . . is one of the following: (1) An employee of an education provider; or (2) Trained in accordance with guidelines established by the dental director appointed by the Oregon Health Authority;</b> . . . <b>See also, the Oregon Department of Education website.</b></i></p>

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<p><a href="#"><u>Pennsylvania</u></a></p>	<p>(a) All children of school age . . . (i) upon original entry into the school, (ii) while in the third grade, and (iii) while in the seventh grade, shall be given a dental examination by a <b>school dentist</b>. Provided, however, that this requirement shall not apply to those school districts or joint school boards which have instituted a program of dental hygiene services as provided in subsection (b) of this section.</p> <p>(b) Any school district or joint school board may institute a program of dental hygiene services for children of school age, which program shall be approved by the Secretary of Health, and for that purpose may employ <b>dental hygienists</b>.</p> <p>See also, the <a href="#"><u>Pennsylvania Department of Health website</u></a>.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Rhode Island</u></a></p>	<p>(a) Each community . . . shall provide for the appointment of a physician to make examinations of the health of the school children,. . . Each community shall further provide for dental screenings by a licensed dentist or licensed dental hygienist or a licensed public health dental hygienist, with at least three (3) years of clinical experience,. . .</p> <p>(b) Each community . . . shall contract with a licensed dentist and/or a licensed public health dental hygienist, for the provision of the dental screenings services required by this section. Dental hygienists performing the dental screenings pursuant to the provisions of this section shall do so under the general supervision of the dentist liable and responsible under the contract with the community or within the collaborative agreement guidelines between a licensed public health hygienist and licensed dentist.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>(e) <b>Dental screenings for children in kindergarten, third, and ninth grade shall only be performed by a licensed dentist.</b></p> <p>See also, the <a href="#"><u>Rhode Island Department of Health website</u></a>.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Washington D.C.</u></a></p>	<p>The Mayor shall establish requirements for . . . the submission of certificates of dental health for elementary and secondary school students. See also, <a href="#"><u>District of Columbia Universal Health Certificate</u></a> : SPECIAL NOTE: "Dental Exam" – The health care provider must indicate whether a dentist has screened or examined the child within the last 12 months. If "No", the child should be referred to a dental home.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>West Virginia</u></a></p>	<p>New enterers in West Virginia public school at first entry of either Pre-K or Kindergarten and all students progressing to grades 2, 7 and 12 should have on file within 45 days of enrollment/entry or prior to the first day of school attendance a record of an oral health examination. [Mandatory as of 2018-19 school year]. All examination forms shall be signed and dated by the student's <b>dentist</b> and completed within the prior 12 calendar months.</p>

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<p><u><a href="#">South Carolina</a></u></p>	<p><b>S.C. Code Ann. § 44 - Chapter 8. Community Oral Health Coordinator (§§ 44-8-10 — 44-8-60)</b></p> <p>The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall implement a targeted community program for dental health education, screening, and treatment referral in the public schools for children in kindergarten, third, seventh, and tenth grades or upon entry into a South Carolina school. Program guidelines must be promulgated in regulations and must include procedures for screenings and for the issuance of an Acknowledgment of Dental Screening for a child indicating that the child has had the dental screening. These guidelines also must provide that the screenings required by this section be made by an authorized provider at no charge.</p> <p>In the target counties of need, no later than one hundred twenty calendar days following a child's start date to five year old kindergarten, third grade, seventh grade, tenth grade, or upon entry into a South Carolina school, the student shall present to the school an Acknowledgment of Dental Screening signed by an authorized practitioner.</p> <p>When a dental screening is performed by an authorized practitioner in a school setting, the practitioner shall issue an Acknowledgment of Dental Screening for the child. The school nurse or other school employee designated by the school district superintendent shall notify the child's parent or guardian to seek further professional attention for the child if indicated by the screening. Upon receipt of written permission from the parent or guardian, the school also shall notify the community oral health coordinator who will serve as a facilitator if further attention is needed upon completion of the screening. The community oral health coordinator also shall maintain all records and data determined necessary by the department.</p> <p>A screening must be performed for students in the targeted counties of need unless a parent or guardian completes an exemption form provided to them by the school. The school shall accept a parental exemption form in place of the Acknowledgment of Dental Screening.</p>
<p><u><a href="#">Delaware</a></u></p>	<p>Del. Code Ann. title 14, § 4123 - Oral Health Screening</p> <p><b>§ 4123. Oral health screening.</b></p> <p>(a) For purposes of this section, "oral health screening" means the screening done by a dental hygienist or dentist.</p> <p>(b) Each school district and charter school must provide an oral health screening to each student enrolled in kindergarten by the last student attendance day of each school year.</p> <p>(c) The school shall record the results of the oral health screenings within the student's electronic health record.</p>

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	<p>(d) If a student fails an oral health screening, the school must notify the student's parent, guardian, or relative caregiver.</p> <p>(e) The Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services must inform a parent or guardian of each student's oral health status by sending home, with the student, a copy of the dental screening results and must refer students who need a dental referral or restorative care to a dentist.</p> <p>(f) The requirements of this section are contingent on the ongoing funding and implementation of the Delaware Smile Check Program under the Department of Health and Social Services or other comparable program of sufficient capacity to provide free oral health screenings to all enrolled kindergarten students.</p>
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