

Kristen Evans, DMD

Diplomate American Board Pediatric Dentistry

Porter Dental

4173 Patterson Ave

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February 25, 2025

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

My name is Dr. Kristen Evans. I am a board-certified pediatric dentist who strongly supports Bill HB771. Nationwide 51 million hours of school are lost due to dental illness. This bill will help prevent and reduce childhood dental decay through early intervention and education.

Dental decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood, affecting one in five children under the age of five. Children in poverty are twice as likely to suffer from tooth decay, and twice as likely not to receive proper dental care. When left untreated, severe cases can result in hospitalizations and general anesthesia, with treatment costs ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 per child. I perform over 75 of such cases, full-mouth dental restorative procedures under general anesthesia each month in hospitals and surgical centers across the state of Maryland. There is no district unaffected by childhood decay in our state!

A national survey by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) found that 75% of parents do not take their child to the dentist by the recommended first birthday, often due to a lack of awareness. By implementing dental screenings before enrollment in public kindergarten, we can educate parents, prevent decay, and reduce the need for costly and traumatic emergency treatments.

We urge Maryland legislators to pass HB 771 and take a critical step toward improving children's oral health. Early screenings and education can spare thousands of children from unnecessary pain, infections, and hospitalizations while saving families and the healthcare system from avoidable financial burdens.

Join me in supporting HB 771 to ensure a healthier future for Maryland's children because baby teeth matter!

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KE', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kristen Evans, DMD