



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 14, 2024

To: The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 767- Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Adult and Pediatric Dental Services – Reimbursement Rates

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 767. Maryland hospitals support efforts to establish a robust network of Medicaid dental providers to ensure beneficiary access to vital oral care.

In 2022, Maryland expanded Medicaid dental coverage to include adults. Coverage expansion, while an important first step, is insufficient without a healthy supply of willing dental providers. If dentist participation in Medicaid is limited, Medicaid beneficiaries may encounter difficulty accessing necessary care despite having coverage.¹ One of the reasons commonly cited by dentists for not participating in Medicaid is the program's low reimbursement rates.²

HB 767 would encourage participation by requiring Medicaid to reimburse dentists at a level that is at least 60% of the average commercial rates in the state. In addition, the bill would also require Medicaid to ensure that payments for adult and pediatric dental services are sufficient to provide access to care for Medicaid beneficiaries. While not the only barrier, raising reimbursement rates may increase dental provider participation, which can improve Medicaid beneficiary access to dental services, ease reliance on hospital emergency departments, and help patients receive the proper care in the most appropriate setting.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on HB 767.

For more information, please contact:

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¹ Hinton, Elizabeth, and Julia Paradise. "Access to Dental Care in Medicaid: Spotlight on Nonelderly Adults." KFF, March 17, 2016. <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/access-to-dental-care-in-medicaid-spotlight-on-nonelderly-adults/>.

² Ibid.