



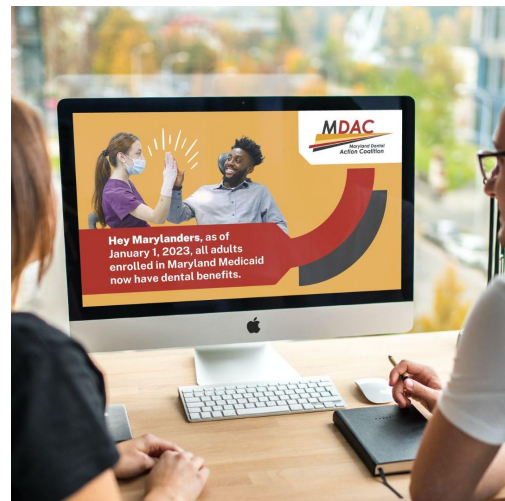
January 2024

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

MDAC Partners with Marketing Agency to Launch Medicaid Benefits Social Media Campaign for Adult Consumers

Thanks in part to the tireless legislative advocacy of Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) and its partners, Medicaid Maryland coverage has been expanded to offer dental benefits for adult enrollees ages 21+. Since the new benefit became available on January 1, 2023, more than \$125 million in Medicaid dental claims have been paid—meaning Marylanders are engaging in this new benefit.

However, MDAC's social media pilot test in summer 2022 for the Adult Dental Pilot Program as well as market research conducted in fall 2023 both revealed that there is significant work to be done to boost awareness, understanding, and engagement amongst eligible Marylanders. MDAC has commissioned marketing firm Devaney & Associates to create a two-year, human-centered social-media-forward campaign to help it reach its goals.



Finding the Right Marketing Partner

Over the summer, MDAC released a request for proposals from marketing agencies about designing a social media campaign for Medicaid adult consumers about the oral health benefit and importance of oral health to overall health. After extensive review of the proposals and facilitation of interviews between a MDAC selection committee and the marketing agency teams, Devaney & Associates, Inc. out of Owings Mills, MD was selected to spearhead the social media campaign on behalf of MDAC.

Devaney & Associates is a Maryland-based, woman-owned, small business that comes to MDAC with years of experience working with state and local government agencies, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and health care coalitions on numerous successful grassroots campaigns that reach Marylanders in all parts of the state. Based on this experience and the agency's marketing and social media expertise, Devaney & Associates, Inc. is uniquely qualified to support MDAC in its commitment to promoting these valuable new benefits of Medicaid in Maryland. <https://devaneyagency.com/category/featured-work/healthcare/>

Setting Our Social Media Campaign Goals

The primary goal of the campaign is to reach eligible Marylanders statewide in order to:

- Boost awareness of the new benefit (as measured by campaign impressions, clicks on, and engagement with our ads)
- Improve understanding of what the new benefit entails (as measured qualitatively by campaign comments)
- Motivate users to take the first step towards engaging with their new benefit (as measured by campaign click-throughs to the campaign landing page hosted on MDAC’s website as well as landing page conversions)

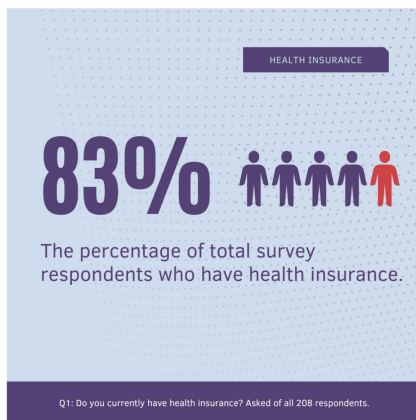
The secondary goal of the campaign is to engage community partners in our mission to “spread the word” by making it easy for them to download and share patient education tools (as measured by downloads). The ultimate goal of all of MDAC’s marketing efforts is to boost overall user engagement with the new benefit.

Initial Social Media Campaign Efforts: Market Research

In November 2023, as part of the initial market research for the social media campaign, Devaney & Associates in collaboration with Maryland Marketing Source administered a short anonymous survey that asked Maryland residents about their use of dental services; their awareness of the need for good oral health; how they like to receive information about health care and dental health; their awareness of dental coverage for Medicaid-eligible Marylanders; and their social media habits. The object of the survey was to gather additional information to create a more informed social media awareness campaign.

Due to privacy concerns, it is challenging to survey Maryland Medicaid patients. Therefore, the survey solicited responses from Maryland residents who closely matched age and income requirements for Medicaid eligibility. This included adults ages 18-64 years with household income (HHI) of less than \$50,000 (138% above FPL for a family of 4 is \$41,400). The survey received a total of 208 responses; a majority of the survey respondents were single, Black and/or Caucasian females under the age of 44 years with children under 18 at home, have a two-year degree or less, work at least part time, and have a HHI under \$50,000. The market research survey had equal representation of respondents from all regions in Maryland (Western Maryland, Capital, Central, Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland). Select findings from the survey will be shared later in 2024.

Image 1



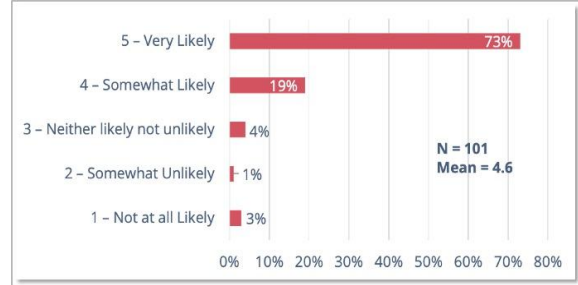
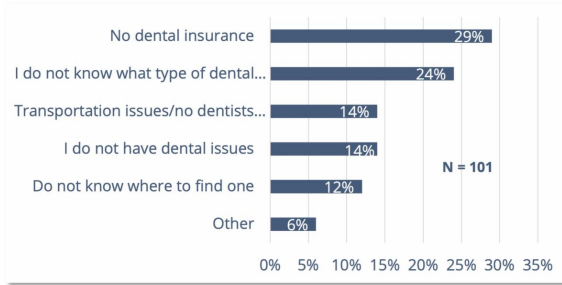
Source: Survey of Maryland Adults, conducted by Devaney & Associates in collaboration with Maryland Marketing Source, November 2023.

Some initial findings from the survey included:

- Of the 208 respondents, 172 have insurance, 36 report they do not
- Out of the 172 that have insurance, 148 (86%) report they have Medicaid
- Out of the 36 that report they do not have insurance, 26 note that they do not know if they are eligible for Medicaid
- Majority of respondents use social media and do so on their phones
- Majority report being aware of Maryland Healthy Smiles program, and 123 respondents are aware dental is now covered under Medicaid
- Roughly a 50/50 split between those that have seen a dentist in the past 2 years, and those who have not (with a slight edge to those who have seen a dentist)

Chart 1: Q3a. Why have you not seen a dentist in the past 2 years? (Select all that apply)

Chart 2: Q5. How likely would you see a dentist if these issues were removed? (5 = Very Likely, 1 = Not at all likely)



Source: Survey of Maryland Adults, conducted by Devaney & Associates in collaboration with Maryland Marketing Source, November 2023.

In December 2023 Devaney & Associates, in collaboration with MDAC, also hosted a 2-hour virtual “Discovery Meeting” to facilitate a discussion among professionals who work directly with Medicaid adult consumers. The discovery group participants included two community ombudsmen from a county health department and a nonprofit service organization, three dentists from urban and rural communities, and two MDAC staff members. During the Discovery Meeting, participants shared various antidotes on the nuances, challenges and wins in supporting Medicaid adult consumers to access oral healthcare.

Some initial key insights from the Discovery Meeting include:

- There is a notable challenge for patients to establish new health care habits after decades without dental coverage, which includes patients seeking preventive and ongoing dental care instead of just in emergency situations.
- Patients ask routinely about dentures, especially as they are accessing dental care for the first time and need to have teeth pulled in order to get the mouth to a healthy place; this is an issue as it is one service not currently covered under Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program through Maryland Medicaid.
- When communicating with patients, it’s important to consider the emotions they are navigating when accessing oral health care. These can include fear of dentist and/or needles, skepticism about medical providers or medical care, lack of understanding of dental benefits, frustrations with delays to be seen, or an inability to make an appointment.

It is also critical to be aware of the barriers that many patients face when trying to access dental care, even under the expanded coverage, including:

- Transportation limitations
- Challenges taking off work or finding childcare
- Long wait time for initial appointment (four-six months)
- Distance to nearest provider (can be up to 90 minutes away, one way, depending on the patient’s location)
- Distance to nearest oral surgeon (can be up to two hours away, one way, depending on the patient’s location)
- Extended treatment plans which require multiple dentist visits to get the mouth to a healthy place

Image 2: Provider Landscape

Image 3: Patient Barriers

2023 PROVIDER LANDSCAPE

For Adult Medicaid Patients

4,236 

ACTIVE
MARYLAND
DENTISTS*

28% Eligible dentists
accepting Maryland
Healthy Smiles patients

1,680** 

Dentists credentialed to
accept Maryland Healthy
Smiles coverage (2023)

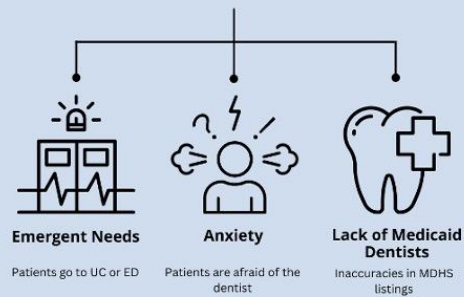
1,175** 

Dentists have treated at
least one adult Medicaid
patient (2023)

*2022 MDH Oral Health Legislative Report

**Maryland Department of Health 1/11/2024

Patient Barriers



Source: Medicaid Adult Dental Campaign: Survey & Discovery Session Findings & Recommendations, Feedback from Discovery Group Session on 12/13/23, Internal Report Produced by Devaney & Associates, January 2024.

Next Steps in the Campaign:

Insights gathered from the market research will be pulled into the goals of the social media campaign, which include building out messaging and materials that help the primary audience feel:

- Empowered and motivated, such as “I am ready to make my dental health a priority.”
- Comforted and supported, such as “I have a partner who’s on my side, will guide me through this, and wants what’s best for me.”
- Confident and educated – “I have a better understanding of my benefits and why I need to see the dentist.”

Devaney & Associates will assist MDAC with the development of various materials and resources to support the extended educational and outreach campaign efforts into 2025, including: target audience analysis, social media content development and advertising, a campaign landing page, stakeholder toolkits, email campaigns, and communication materials. At this time, MDAC anticipates the first stage of the social media campaign to go live in March 2024 across its social media platforms. The campaign is slated to run for five months.

Rural Populations Have Worse Oral Health Care Access, Utilization, and Outcomes Compared to Urban Areas

4 in 10 Adults Living in Rural Environments Have Not Visited the Dentist in More Than a Year



CareQuest Institute for Oral Health recently released a new report detailing the causes of worsening oral health access and outcomes for rural populations in comparison with their urban and suburban counterparts.

The report reveals that four in 10 adults living in rural environments (40%) have not visited the dentist in more than one year, compared with 35% of urban and 30% of suburban residents. Among the most significant challenges preventing people living in rural areas from receiving adequate oral health care are provider shortages, lack of insurance coverage, and transportation barriers.

“Oral health is more than just a health issue, it’s an equity issue impacting people of all backgrounds, economic statuses, and geographic locations. We must continue to collect data, share our findings, and advance policies and practices that guide these populations to adequate care and better health” stated Kaz Rafia, Chief Health Equity Officer and Executive Vice President at CareQuest Institute for Oral Health.

Other key findings summarized in the “Still Searching: Meeting Oral Health Needs in Rural Settings” report include: 34% of individuals living in a rural environment rate their oral health as fair or poor, compared with 27% of urban residents and 24% of suburban residents; 67% of rural areas are Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas; just over one-third of rural residents (34%) do not have dental insurance coverage, compared to 29% of urban and 24% of suburban residents; and employers in rural areas are less likely to offer dental insurance than employers in more populated areas.

In response to these challenges, the report recommends ways to mitigate barriers to access for approximately 46 million people who reside in rural areas. These strategies include teledentistry, expanding dental coverage and the dental workforce, and medical-dental integration.

The findings of this report are based on responses to the 2023 State of Oral Health Equity in America survey, the largest nationally representative, annual survey focused exclusively on adults’ knowledge, attitudes, experiences, and behaviors related to oral health.

Eighteen of Maryland’s 24 counties are identified as rural. [Read the full report.](#)

Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact Legislation Proposed in States

Legislation to adopt the compact is active in 12 states.

The Council of State Governments (CSG) is partnering with the Department of Defense (DoD), the American Dental Association (ADA), and the American Dental Hygienists’ Association (ADHA) to support the mobility of licensed dentists and dental hygienists through the development of a new interstate compact. This compact will create reciprocity among participant states and reduce the barriers to license portability. Once enacted by seven states, the compact will create a pathway to licensure portability for dentists and dental hygienists who are licensed in member states. Licensees who live in states that are compact members can apply for a “compact privilege” that will allow them to practice in another member state.

Under the [model compact](#) that was written by The Council for State Governments, license holders will be granted the opportunity to apply for compact privilege if they do the following:

- Hold a license as a dentist or dental hygienist;
- Graduate from a Commission on Dental Accreditation-accredited program;
- Successfully complete a clinical assessment for licensure, with “clinical assessment” currently defined as an examination or process required for licensure as a dentist or dental hygienist, as applicable, that provides evidence of clinical competence in dentistry or dental hygiene;
- Have passed a National Board Examination of the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations or another examination accepted, by rule, as a requirement for licensure;
- Meet any jurisprudence requirements;
- Complete a criminal background check;

- Submit an application and pay applicable fees; and
- Comply with requirements to submit specified information for administrative purposes.

On Apr. 27, [Iowa](#) became the first state to join the compact. [Washington](#) state and [Tennessee](#) became the second and third states, respectively. **The 12 states with active legislation to adopt the compact are:** Colorado, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin.



The following article was submitted by the Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health:

The Office of Oral Health is pleased to announce that four water systems in Maryland received the 2022 Public Water System Quality Award.

This award recognizes those public water systems that adjust the fluoride concentration in drinking water and achieve a monthly average fluoride level that is in the optimal range for 12 consecutive months in a year, as documented in the Water Fluoridation Reporting System (WFRS).

WFRS is a national health surveillance tool that assists states in managing their water fluoridation program. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) initiated the Water Fluoridation Quality Awards in 2002 to recognize outstanding performance in fluoridation management by public water systems. Over the past four years, 32 states have had at least one public water system in their state receive the award. In calendar year 2022, there were 1,209 adjusted systems in 27 states recognized by CDC.

Congratulations to the Provinces, Sharpsburg, Salisbury - Paleo WTP, and Salisbury - Park WTP water systems for receiving this recognition. Certificates can be viewed on the [Office of Oral Health's website](#).

“I had one patient who was so embarrassed by his mouth that he wouldn’t talk to anyone. I told him that if he meets me halfway [with his commitment to oral health] that I would give him a smile he’s proud of. The treatment changed his life. Now he talks to everyone, he has a girlfriend...it changed his world. Patients like that make this worth it. Their gratitude keeps you going.”

- Dr. Ali Khayyer, DDS, Landmark Dental, Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program, on impact of dental care on an adult patient

NEWS & RESOURCES

[Access to Care](#)

[RESOURCE: 2018-2023 Maryland Oral Health Plan](#)

[The Barriers to Oral Health Care Illustration | CMS](#)

Health Equity

[Quality Oral Health for the LGBTQ+ Population](#)

Maternal and Child Health

[Association Between Dental Visits During Pregnancy and Setting for Prenatal Care](#)

[Maryland Included in HRSA National Maternal and Child Health Initiative](#)

[National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center/Oral Health Learning Café COHSII | National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center](#)

[Promoting Oral Health During Pregnancy | National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center](#)

Oral Health/ Overall Health

[A Call for More Oral Health Research in Primary Care](#)

[Diabetes and its Impact on Periodontal Care](#)

[How Periodontitis and Cardiovascular Disease are Intricately Linked](#)

[New Initiative Focuses on Oral Health Clinicians in Prevention and Early Detection of Heart Disease](#)

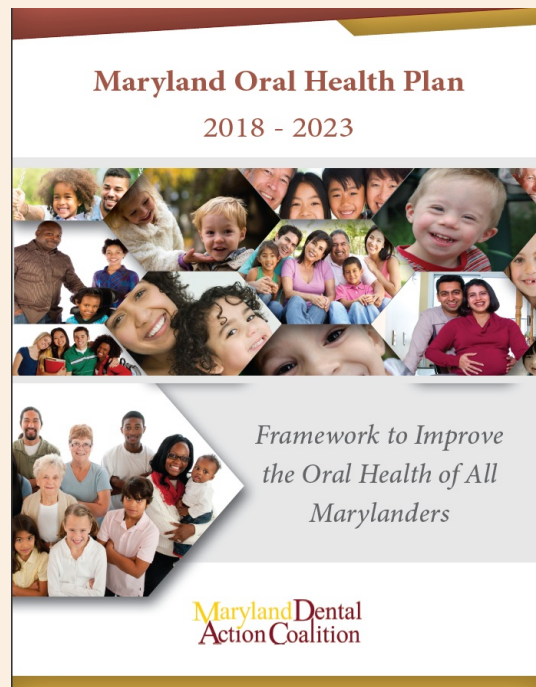
[Relationship Between Oral Health and Heart Disease](#)

Medicaid/ Medicare

[Emerging Approaches in Oral Health Care: Considerations for Minimally Invasive Care in Medicaid \(2024\) Produced by the Center for Health Care Strategies](#)

Events/ Webinars

[February is National Children's Dental Health Month \(2024\) Resources and events from OHRC](#)



The 2018-2023 Maryland Oral Health Plan outlines 11 oral health goals in three key areas: access to oral health care, oral disease and injury prevention, and oral health literacy and education.

[DOWNLOAD THE PLAN](#)

The Maryland Oral Health Plan is financially supported by the Maryland Department of Health.

Legislative Contacts

[U.S. Senators \(MD\)](#)

[U.S. Representatives \(MD\)](#)

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

Meetings/ Events/ Webinars

[National Mobile & Teledentistry Conference
March 1-2, 2024
Dallas, Texas](#)

[American Dental Education Association New Beginnings, Endless Opportunities
March 9-12, 2024
New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center](#)

[and others](#)

**Spotlight: Best Practice Approach:
Early Childhood Caries Prevention
and Management**

February 7, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. ET

Hosted by the Association of State
and Territorial Dental Directors
(ASTDD)

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 819 6774 4683

Passcode: 617368

To use your phone for audio, dial
(305) 224-1968 or (646) 931-3860.

[Access zoom link here](#)

**Reducing Consumption of Added
Sugars: The Healthy People 2030
Oral Health Promotional Series**

February 14, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. ET

Hosted by the American Academy of
Pediatric Dentistry, the American
Academy of Pediatrics, and the
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid
Services

[Learn more and register here](#)

**Medicaid and CHIP: Dental Health
Coverage Provides Families with
Peace of Mind**

February 14, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. ET

Presented by the Connecting Kids to
Coverage National Campaign

[Learn more and register here](#)

**Maryland Area Health Education
Centers Community Health Worker
Training**

March 4, 2024 – April 30, 2024

MDH Accredited Training Program:
No. 004-2020-G

[Learn more and register here](#)

[New Orleans, LA](#)

**[National Oral Health Conference](#)
[April 15-17, 2024](#)**

**[Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The
Arch - St. Louis, Missouri](#)**

**[Hosted by ASTDD and the
American Association of Public
Health Dentistry](#)**

**[American Academy of Pediatric
Dentistry 2024](#)**

[May 23-26, 2024](#)

**[Metro Toronto Convention Center
Toronto Canada](#)**



Join us! To become an MDAC member, [click here.](#)

CONTACT

Do you have events or announcements you'd like to share? Contact MDAC, and we'll make every effort to include them in our next newsletter, as space permits.

Contact
MDAC

JOIN

MDAC is statewide coalition of clinical care providers, governments, non-profits, academic institutions, managed care organizations, foundations and associations working collaboratively to improve the health of all Marylanders through increased oral health promotion, disease prevention, education, advocacy and access to oral health care.

Join
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www.mdac.us

FOLLOW US



Maryland Dental Action Coalition | 10015 Old Columbia Road, Suite B-215, Columbia, MD 21046

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