

2019 MDAC INITIATIVES IMPROVE ORAL HEALTH OF MARYLANDERS

Strong steps forward create momentum for further improvements in 2020

In 2019, MDAC, in collaboration with its coalition partners, made significant progress to break down oral health inequities, address disparities, and improve access to dental care for all Marylanders, no matter where they live or what their special circumstances might be. The following key actions were taken:

Augmented and supported implementation of the Maryland Medical Assistance – Dental Coverage for Adults – Pilot Program.

To help ensure the success of the Medicaid adult dental pilot program, MDAC formed and facilitated a Medicaid adult dental collaborative. The collaborative:

- Worked with Maryland Medicaid to support providers in helping patients obtain preventative services on a routine basis by providing feedback on the proposed benefit package from the MDAC clinical community to help ensure the benefit package was fair to providers. Several recommendations from the MDAC clinical community were accepted by Medicaid.
- Hosted *Treating Adults with Anxiety and Special Needs: Approach and Technique for Positive Outcomes*, a class to provide clinicians with the knowledge, tools, and techniques to treat anxious and special needs patients.
- Worked with the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) to encourage provider participation in the Medicaid adult dental pilot program through presentations, e-blasts from MSDA leadership, and features in the MSDA newsletter.
- Participated in a panel discussion on *Medicaid and Maryland Healthy Smiles Program: Improving the Smiles of Marylanders* at MSDA's Chesapeake Dental Conference.
- In partnership with the Maryland Oral Health Association (MOHA), worked with county health departments to encourage and support provider and member outreach. MOHA members include dental health coordinators, directors, and oral health representatives from local health departments, state facilities, federally qualified health centers, educational institutions, and other public oral health programs.
- Identified more than 80 social service agencies in Maryland that provide assistance to low income adults and solicited their guidance, support, and participation in education and outreach efforts to facilitate implementation of the Medicaid adult dental pilot program.
- Conducted a direct mail postcard test campaign targeted to dual eligible adults who were auto assigned to Chase Brexton Health Care in Baltimore and Chesapeake Health Care on the Eastern Shore. The postcards contained phone numbers to make a dental appointment, secure transportation, or get answers to questions about the program. A broader campaign is planned for 2020.

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Identified gaps in access to Medicaid adult dental care in Maryland.

To help ensure that dual-eligible Medicaid beneficiaries can access dental services in their area of the state, MDAC:

- Mapped, by county and zip code, the number of adults eligible to participate in the Medicaid adult dental pilot program, Medicaid providers, federally qualified health center dental clinics (FCHCs), community health centers (CHC), and safety net providers to identify areas of the state that lack a sufficient number of Medicaid adult dental care providers.
- Worked with Medicaid and SkyGen on mailings to clinicians to encourage their participation in the pilot program.
- Arranged to have Medicaid representatives attend quarterly MOHA meetings to answer questions and provide program updates.

Implemented activities to identify and remove gaps in provider workforce and capital needs to support access to dental services for an expanded Medicaid population.

To determine the need for a state capital funding program, similar to those that support community behavioral health providers and federally qualified health centers, MDAC:

- Queried nearly 100 private providers, FQHCS, county health departments, CHCs, and other safety net providers to assess the support needed to expand provider capacity.
- MDAC and its coalition partners testified before the Maryland Senate Finance and House Health and Government Operations committees in support of *The Maryland Department of Health – Community Dental Clinic Grants Program*, a bill to establish a capital grant program to institute or expand dental services in community health centers to serve the growing number of Marylanders in need of dental care.
- Worked to help ensure passage of SB158/HB322 – *The Maryland Department of Health – Community Dental Clinics Grants Program*. Governor Larry Hogan signed the bill into law on May 13, 2019.

Facilitated, supported, and led statewide implementation of the 2018-2023 Maryland Oral Health Plan.

Although most 2019 activities centered on the adult dental pilot program, MDAC continued to facilitate, support, and lead statewide implementation of the Maryland Oral Health Plan. MDAC:

- Shared successes implemented by coalition members through its newsletter and by facilitating presentations at meetings of the Maryland Oral Health Association (MOHA). Successes included:
 - Choptank’s new pediatric dental program
 - Office of Oral Health’s “2 Minutes with Your Dentist Can Save Your Life Campaign”
 - Chesapeake Health Care’s work to integrate oral and obstetrics care
 - AHEC West’s efforts to improve the oral health of those recovering from substance abuse
 - Allegany County Health Department Dental Clinic’s successful launch of the adult dental waiver program
 - Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)
 - Catholic Charities’ implementation of a collaborative care model.
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- Reviewed, revised, and updated the English and Spanish Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids brochures and website with the support and guidance of the MDAC literacy and education committee. The materials are designed to help inform and educate parents of young children on the importance of good oral health to the overall health of their child.
- Created, with the support of the Office of Oral Health, a new poster, in both English and Spanish, that calls out the oral health benefits of drinking fluoridated tap water. To order posters, please contact MDAC at info@mdac.us.
- With the Office of Oral Health, co-sponsored the 10th Annual Ava Roberts Pediatric Seminar, focused on the connections between good oral and overall health. The seminar included sessions on obesity screening and prevention, the connection between dental disease, digestion, and family obesity, social determinants of health and chronic disease, and oral health and pediatric obesity.
- Conducted the state's first school dental sealant program assessment with the support of the Office of Oral Health.

The hard work, cooperation, and collaboration of MDAC and its coalition partners resulted in major steps forward in improving the oral health of Marylanders. Beginning in June 2019, more than 33,000 dual eligible adults gained access to dental care through the Medicaid adult dental pilot program. Six months after the launch of the program (as of December 31, 2019), 7,483 valid claims were submitted by 538 unique providers on behalf of 4,072 unique members. The \$800 annual cap was met by 264 members. In the first 7 months of the program, Medicaid spent \$1,254,638.94. It is clear that eligible participants – many of whom have not seen a dentist in years – are accessing care and establishing a dental home.

Well done, Maryland!

Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders