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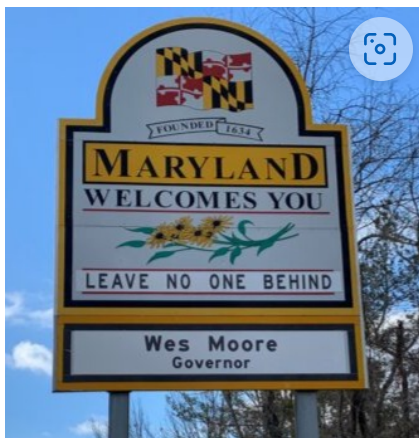
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May 2025

## MDH Details How Medicaid Cuts Would Impact Residents

*Proposed cuts would reduce access to care*



On May 11, 2025, Congress released a budget reconciliation proposal that included extreme cuts across the Medicaid program. In response, the Maryland Department of Health has released a new fact sheet that details how some policy proposals designed at cutting Medicaid would impact Marylanders.

The proposed cuts include work requirements that make it harder for people to enroll in and keep their health coverage, a reduction in federal funding for providers, and limits on care and

services for children, families, and older adults.

"Every change proposed by the federal government will impact individuals receiving coverage through Medicaid and the providers that serve them" said Dr. Meena Seshamani, Maryland Secretary of Health. "Children, families, and older adults rely on the state and federal government to work in partnership to provide their critical care. The Maryland Department of Health remains committed to that partnership and to all Marylanders."

Maryland Medicaid is one of the state's largest, most effective anti-poverty programs. It delivers lifesaving health care coverage for over 1.5 million people, including almost half of all children in the state. Medicaid supports families throughout their lifespans. Medicaid pays for over 40% of all births and provides coverage for seniors in nursing homes, veterans, and people with disabilities.

Medicaid is also an economic engine of the state's health care system supporting over 120,000 providers in hospitals and clinics across the state. It is the primary insurance for nursing home coverage, making up over 80% of nursing home revenue. Proposed federal cuts and onerous new requirements would likely force providers to cut costs and limit patient access.

Medicaid is a joint federal state program and is funded and managed collaboratively by both the federal government and individual state governments. The federal government is a critical partner in the state's ability to ensure access to health coverage and services for its Medicaid population. Maryland Medicaid's budget is \$14.6 billion, almost 60% of which is funded by the federal government. In total, Medicaid makes up more than 20% of the state's total budget.

"These proposed changes shift the government's focus from providing quality health coverage to children and families to, instead, reducing investment in our already-strained health care system and creating unnecessary, inefficient barriers to care," said Ryan Moran, Deputy Secretary of Health Care Financing and Medicaid Director.

### Learn about the Impact of Potential Medicaid Proposals on Maryland Medicaid

**Note:** On May 20, 2025, [Maryland Governor Wes Moore signed legislation](#) establishing a commission to monitor and assess the impact of federal changes to healthcare programs and provide recommendations to protect coverage access.

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## A Snapshot of Adults' Dental and Medical Care Coverage

### *A CareQuest Institute for Oral Health Report*

How many adults in the US do not have dental insurance? Approximately 72 million adults in the US (27%) do not have dental insurance — almost three times the percentage of adults who lack health insurance. The State of Oral Health Equity in America survey is the largest annual, nationally representative survey about the oral health of adults in the US. More than 9,000 adults responded in 2024. More key findings include:



- Approximately one third of Medicare (31%) and Medicaid (33%) recipients do not have dental insurance, and more than four out of five adults (83%) without health insurance also lack dental insurance.
- Individuals with less education and lower incomes reported lacking dental insurance in greater percentages than those with higher levels of education and income.
- Adults in the youngest (aged 18–29) and oldest (aged 60+) groups lack dental insurance in greater numbers than adults in the middle age groups

(aged 30–59).

These findings show the importance of expanding access to dental coverage in the US, which includes strengthening benefits in Medicare, Medicaid, and Affordable Care Act Marketplace plans.

[Access full CareQuest Institute report.](#)

## **OPEN Hill Day, 2025: Oral Health Advocates on Capitol Hill**

*Representatives from 36 states travel to DC for collective impact*

Hill Day is a coordinated visit with members of Congress/their staff to present a unified message about an important issue. It provides advocates and organizations an opportunity to meet with their US Senators and US House Representative. An effective Hill Day is a powerful advocacy tool, strengthens relationships with policymakers, and amplifies policy priorities.



On Wednesday, May 14, MDAC staff joined oral health advocates from 36 states in Washington, DC for **OPEN Hill Day** to educate members of Congress and congressional staff members about the importance of oral health to overall health. Given discussions on the budget reconciliation bill and the impact congressional decisions will have on state programs, recent staff cuts to the Department of Health and Human Services and growing backlash against community water fluoridation, the timing of this activity was particularly important.

In addition to MDAC, the Maryland delegation included representatives from the National Dental Association, Special Olympics, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. The content of meetings included the following asks of Maryland legislators:

**Oppose Medicaid cuts** that would jeopardize access to dental care for 72 million people.

- Medicaid is a vital source of dental coverage for children, people with disabilities, and low-income adults and seniors — improving health outcomes, reducing medical debt, and boosting economic opportunity and job performance.
- Cuts to Medicaid funding would force states to eliminate adult dental benefits, leading to increased emergency room use, reduced services or closures of safety net dental providers, and higher system-wide health care costs.

- Find out more here: [Why Medicaid Matters to Oral Health](#)

**Improve access to dental care for veterans** who get medical care through the VA.

- The majority of veterans do not qualify for VA dental benefits, and those who do often face provider shortages, geographic barriers, and high out-of-pocket costs — placing them at greater risk for chronic conditions and financial strain.
- Nearly 8 million veterans report fair or poor oral health, with rural and disabled veterans disproportionately affected due to limited provider access and higher care costs.
- Find out more here: [Veterans Need Affordable Dental Care](#)

**Support the HEADs UP Act**, which would designate people with I/DD as a Medically Underserved Population (MUP) and increase their access to oral health care.

- Individuals with I/DD face worse oral health outcomes, report less frequent dental visits and higher rates of discrimination and emergency dental care use.
- Designating the I/DD population as a MUP would expand access to tailored services through health centers, enhance provider training and support, and unlock targeted federal funding to address long-standing access gaps — including in oral health care.
- Find out more here: [Improving Oral Health Access for People with Disabilities](#)

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## **Strategies to Increase Preventive Oral Health**

*Maryland bill focuses on closing gaps for children to dental care*

Childhood caries is the most common chronic disease among children, affecting nearly 23% of those ages 2-5 and 52% of those ages 6-8. Left untreated, poor oral health can lead to long-term complications, including an increased risk of heart disease, diminished self-confidence and negative impacts on academic performance. While Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefits help children nationwide, access preventive dental care annually, barriers such as financial constraints, transportation challenges and geographic limitations persist.

Access to dental services for children has decreased in Maryland, reversing years of progress. According to Maryland Department of Health's Annual Oral Health Legislative Reports, the percentage of children with Medicaid who accessed preventative dental services increased from about 50% in 2008 to 64% in 2015. Progress plateaued during the 2016-2019 period with about 63-64% of children receiving preventative dental services under Medicaid. The numbers plummeted during COVID and have yet to rebound at just 56% of children obtaining preventive dental services in Medicaid in 2023.

On May 20, 2025, Governor Moore signed [HB 1143/SB](#) *Establishing the Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children's Oral Health Through School-Based Programs* to study and make recommendations on ways to improve

school-based dental programs. The bill supports children and Maryland families. Children are already in school. By building stronger school-based dental programs, Maryland can improve the oral health of children through basic preventative care; and build bridges to permanent dental homes for families.



The bill creates an interprofessional Collaborative to bring together dental hygienists, dentists, school nurses, and educational professionals to design evidenced-based public health programs. Potential approaches include expanding the utilization of dental hygienists providing preventative services; exploring whether school nurses can play a role in applying fluoride varnishes under guidelines developed by Departments of Health and Education; and developing practical strategies to provide linkages to permanent dental homes. MDAC gratefully acknowledges bill sponsors and oral health legislative champions Delegate Heather Bagnall (Anne Arundel County), Delegate Bonnie Cullison (Montgomery County), Delegate Nicholas Kipke (Anne Arundel) & Senator Clarence Lam (Anne Arundel & Howard County).

In a [Snapshot article](#) on May 8, 2025, the National Conference of State Legislatures highlights five strategies states are using to provide oral health services for children.

*Expanding Scope of Practice: States are modifying the roles of oral health professions to increase access to services in schools and public health settings.*

- [Hawaii](#) allows dental assistants to operate under general supervision in public health settings, including schools.
- [Iowa](#) permits registered dental assistants who complete specialized training to place dental sealants on children's teeth.

*Implementing School-Based Services: Schools serve as important access points for preventive dental care including [oral health screenings](#) and sealants to students.*

- [Colorado](#) is piloting a school-based dental program to provide oral health screenings for kindergarten and third-grade students while assessing the cost effectiveness of screenings, and programmatic best practices.
- [Kansas](#) operates a statewide school oral health screening initiative, reaching over 100,000 school-age children each year. The initiative also requires outcome data collection to inform program improvements.



*Enhancing Education and Awareness: Some states integrate oral health education in school curricula or public health programs.*

- [Oregon](#) requires oral health instruction as part of the health education curriculum for students in public schools.
- Iowa's [I-Smile Program](#) places dental hygienists in clinics run by the federal supplemental nutritional program for women, infants and children known as WIC, Head Start centers, preschools and childcare sites to provide education and connect children and pregnant women to care.

*Expanding Telehealth and Mobile Dental Services: States are leveraging teledentistry and mobile dental services to provide oral health care to children.*

- [Ohio](#) permits mobile dental facilities to operate in schools.
- Nevada has a [pilot program](#) allowing children enrolled in Medicaid to receive virtual dental checkups, at-home fluoride kits and caregiver education on fluoride applications.

*Integrating Oral Health into Primary Care: Some states are embedding dental services into pediatric primary care settings.*

- [Virginia](#) permits medical assistants to administer topical fluoride varnish.
- [Texas](#) allows physicians, physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses to apply fluoride varnish during Texas Health Steps checkups and bill for the service, while also referring children to a dental home.



## **New Dashboard: How is Each State's Oral Health**

CareQuest Institute's new tool provide insights into each state's oral health.

CareQuest Institute recently launched the [State Oral Health Dashboard](#), a visual tool that provides data on 16 different measures. The resource includes adult annual visits and travel time to the dentist — for all 50 states and DC.

The resource seeks to improve health outcomes and reduce costs, policymakers, administrators, and advocates need data to identify areas for improvement and focus. Check it out!

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



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## **CDC Infection Control Standards Now Available**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recently made a push to communicate its infection control standards for dentistry. These [infection control standards](#) are recommended for use in all dental healthcare settings, in addition to existing recommendations and requirements.

The Office of Oral Health's (OOH) [school-based health programs](#) and [Maryland Dent-Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program](#) have begun to utilize these recommendations, and the materials have been distributed to all other clinical partners of OOH. These, and other infection prevention and control (IPC) materials, will be made available more broadly in the "OOH IPC toolbox" in July 2025.

For additional information on infection control in the dental setting, visit OOH's [website](#).

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## **Congratulations to Pathways to Bright Futures Awardees!**

24 Future Dental Professionals Honored at Award Ceremony



We're thrilled to announce the recipients of the 2025/2026 Pathways to Bright Futures Awards! Twenty four students were recognized by Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) and the Maryland State Dental Association Foundation (MSDA) at a ceremony held on May 7 in Baltimore at the Dr. Samuel D. Harris National Museum of Dentistry with the Maryland Department of Health.

MDAC awarded ten Pathways to Bright Futures Academic Awards to support students enrolled in dental, dental hygiene, or dental assisting programs who are committed to practicing in dental healthcare provider shortage areas. This year's expanded eligibility included Baltimore County, Western Maryland, and the Eastern Shore. Of the 17 applicants, six recipients are dental students and four are studying dental hygiene. Their future service plans include Baltimore City, Western Maryland, and the Eastern Shore.

MSDA Foundation awarded 12 Pathways to Bright Futures Test Scholarship Awards to Maryland pre-dental students who aspire to pursue a career in dentistry and also intend to practice in a dental healthcare shortage area. This scholarship provided reimbursement for Dental Admission Test costs.

[The selected students are announced here.](#)

Both awards are part of the **Maryland Department of Health, Office of Oral Health's [Pathways to Bright Futures](#)** initiative, which encourages youth in underserved areas to explore careers in oral health.

We're excited to offer these awards again for the 2026/2027 academic year. Applications will open in November 2025. Know a student who may qualify? Encourage them to email us so we can notify them when applications open.

Congratulations to all of this year's awardees!

***"The shutdown, or the butchering, of the CDC's oral health department will create a generational catastrophe for the 16.3% of America's children***



***living at poverty level. This action, along with [the removal of] fluoride from public water supplies, will have damaging impacts that will follow these children for the rest of their lives.”***

Barry Lyon, DDS, dental director for Main Street Children’s Dentistry and Orthodontics and the chief clinical auditor for Dental Care Alliance, expressed his concerns to [Becker’s Dental + DSO Review](#) for the consequences facing Americans’ oral health without the CDC’s leadership in addition to the growing anti-fluoride sentiment across the U.S.

## NEWS & RESOURCES

### Access to Care

[Federal Funding Uncertainties: Can dentistry do more with less?](#)

[Make America Healthy Again: What it could mean for oral health](#)

[Out of Pocket: A Snapshot of adult’s dental and Medicare coverage](#)

[Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage checker](#)

### Fluoride

[FDA Begins Action to Remove Ingestible Fluoride Prescription Drug Products for Children from the Market](#)

[Statement from the ADA on FDA Action to Remove Ingestible Fluoride Prescription Drug Products](#)

[Get Ready for a Surge in Tooth Decay](#)

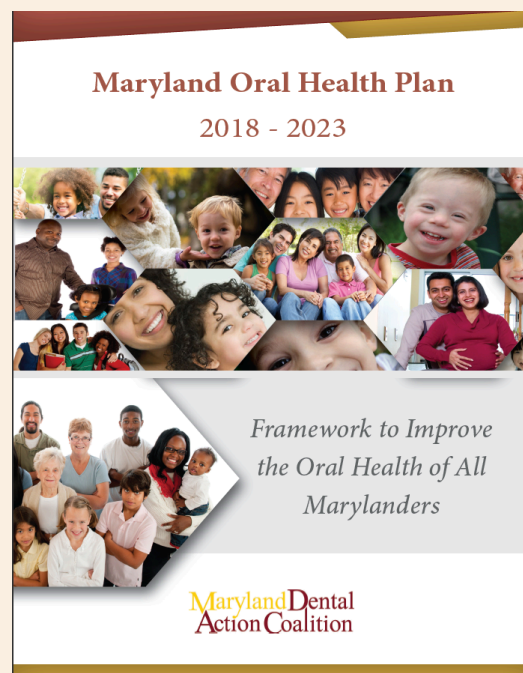
[California Public Health Leaders Reaffirm Importance of Fluoridation for Oral Health](#)

[Fluoride: What Is It and Why Is it Added to Drinking Water](#)

### RESOURCE: Provider Enrollment Flyer

To learn how Maryland dental providers can enroll in the Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program and resources provided, [review this enrollment flyer](#) and share with others!

### RESOURCE: Maryland Oral Health Plan



[Florida Becomes Second State to Ban Fluoride in Public Water](#)

[State of the Tap: Policy Actions on Fluoride in Drinking Water](#)

[My Dental Patients Lived with the Consequences of Fluoride-free Water](#)

[Washu Defend Fluoride with Facts](#)

## **General**

['Catastrophe': Dental Leaders React to Shutdown of CDC Oral Health Division](#)

[Advancing Oral Health Across the Lifespan: Proceedings of a Workshop](#)

## **Maternal Health**

[Strengthening Postpartum Care Coordination to Improve Maternal Health](#)

## **Medicaid**

[House Budget Committee Overcomes Conservative Pushback to Advance Reconciliation Package](#)

[State-Level Context for Federal Medicaid Cuts of \\$625 Billion and Enrollment Declines of 10.3 Million](#)

## **Medicare**

[Availability of Dental Benefits Within Medicare Advantage Plans by Enrollment and County | Health Care Economics, Insurance, Payment](#)

## **Mental Health**

[Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

## **Oral Health/Overall Health**

[Oral Health as Whole Person Health: The role of oral health in](#)

The 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**

[Maryland State of Reform Health Policy Conference](#)  
[June 12, 2025](#)  
[Baltimore Marriott Waterfront](#)  
[Baltimore, MD](#)

[National Association of Community Health Centers](#)  
[Community Health Institute Conference and Expo 2025](#)  
[August 17-19, 2025](#)  
[Hyatt Regency Chicago](#)  
[Chicago, IL](#)

[The National Academy for State Health Policy Annual Conference](#)  
[Riding the Waves of State Health Policy](#)  
[September 8-10, 2025](#)  
[San Diego, CA](#)

[ADHA25 Annual Conference](#)  
[October 4-6, 2025](#)  
[Long Beach, CA](#)

[Maryland Rural Health Association Annual Conference](#)

[addressing chronic disease](#)

[Opportunities to Improve Oral Health Outcomes for People with Intellectual or Developmental Disability](#)

### **Veterans**

[All Veterans Deserve Comprehensive Dental Care](#)

[The Oral Health of Veterans Living in Maryland](#)

[Doctors Expand Dental Care Access for Veterans in Need](#)

### **Workforce**

[2025 Maryland General Assembly: MDAC Addresses Workforce Issues](#)

[Medicaid Oral Health Workforce Implementation Learning Series](#)

[Dental Hygienist Salaries Outpace Household Incomes in Several States](#)

[Turning the Tide: Rural Health Solutions for a Changing Maryland](#)  
[October 19-21, 2025](#)  
[Doubletree by Hilton Annapolis Hotel](#)  
[Annapolis, MD](#)

[ADA SmileCon®](#)  
[October 23-25, 2025](#)  
[Walter E. Washington Convention Center](#)  
[Washington, DC](#)

Maryland Dental Action Coalition  
Biennial Oral Health Summit  
Monday, November 17, 2025  
Turf Valley Conference Center  
Ellicott City, MD  
Save the Date!



**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.

### **JOIN**

MDAC is statewide coalition of clinical care providers, governments, non-profits, academic institutions, managed care organizations, foundations and associations working collaboratively to

Contact MDAC

improve the health of all Marylanders through increased oral health promotion, disease prevention, education, advocacy and access to oral health care.

Join MDAC

**www.mdac.us**

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