



May 2020

CARDIN, VAN HOLLEN PUSH TO PROTECT DENTAL COVERAGE, ACCESS **Urge colleagues to fund oral health access, infrastructure in COVID-19 legislation**

In an effort to protect access to dental coverage, Maryland Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen are urging that upcoming COVID-19 legislation include provisions to enable those who have lost their dental insurance coverage during the pandemic to receive government-backed insurance. They are also asking that uninsured children and adults have adequate access to Medicaid coverage.

[In a letter to Congressional leadership](#) penned by Cardin and signed by U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Richard J. Durbin (D-IL), Cory A. Booker (D-NJ), Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D-PA), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), and Bernie Sanders (I-VT), the senators requested a temporary increase in the federal matching rate for Medicare spending, which would help states maintain Medicaid dental coverage during the COVID-19 crisis. They also asked for \$75 million in public oral health infrastructure funding, which would provide state health departments with funding to improve their ability to deliver care.

MDAC deeply appreciates the leadership of Maryland Senators Cardin and Van Hollen, their recognition of the importance of oral health to overall health, and their work to improve access to oral health care for our most vulnerable citizens.

MDAC SUPPORTS ROLE OF ORAL HEALTH IN ADDRESSING COVID-19 **Letters urge Congressional leaders, CMS to include oral health in COVID-19 funding**



MDAC joined nearly 200 national, state, and local organizations from a broad range of health disciplines in urging Congressional leaders to support the important role of oral health in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. The organizations are all members of OPEN, the Oral Health Policy and Equity Network.

[In a letter](#) to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, OPEN noted that the COVID-19 pandemic is straining the nation's oral health care system, leaving many without access to basic oral health care. OPEN asked that the next COVID-19 relief package include policies that:

- Stabilize state budgets to protect access to essential oral health care by increasing the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) by at least 12 percent and further increasing the FMAP for Medicaid dental services by five percent; and
- Provide immediate support to state health departments and oral health programs by establishing an oral health infrastructure fund to respond to crisis-related oral health needs.

The letter noted that a lack of basic oral health care gives people no choice but to turn to expensive emergency department visits for chronic dental conditions, further straining hospital capacity. It also noted the importance of oral health to overall health and the management of chronic conditions.

The House passed the [HEROES Act](#) on Friday, May 15, kicking off negotiations that will result in a final package within the next few weeks.

MDAC requests support for Medicaid providers in Maryland

On May 13, 2020, MDAC sent a [letter to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services \(CMS\)](#) requesting the inclusion of dental providers in the distribution of Congressionally- appropriated funds to Medicaid providers in Maryland.

Citing the need to maintain the viability of the Medicaid dental community during the COVID-19 pandemic to help ensure vulnerable populations have access to oral health care, MDAC urged CMS to include Medicaid

dental providers in the CARES Act funds.

The Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center, Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Maryland Area Health Education Center West, Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health, Maryland Community Health System, Maryland Dental Hygienists' Association, and Maryland Rural Health Association were signatories to the letter. The Maryland State Dental Association sent a similar request to CMS.

HOGAN ALLOWS RESUMPTION OF ELECTIVE DENTAL PROCEDURES

Dentists must follow guidance issued by Secretary of Health

During a May 6, 2020 press briefing, Governor Hogan announced that health care providers would be allowed to resume elective procedures effective May 7. His order affects all health care providers, including dental providers.

Providers must follow the guidance outlined in the Department of Health's guidance on PPE, social distancing, and screening.

MDAC applauds Governor Hogan and his public health team for putting the safety and health of Marylanders first during the COVID-19 epidemic. We are thankful that our state has reached the point where it is safe for Marylanders to get dental care and other needed health services. Thank you to all the health care providers and first responders that have helped Maryland begin to flatten the curve.

Read the Secretary of Health's [guidance](#).

Other important [COVID-19 resources](#) for dental providers can be found on the MDAC website.

MDAC ISSUES TELEDENTISTRY RESOURCE GUIDE

Provides information, resources to implement teledentistry in dental practices

In April, Governor Larry Hogan signed legislation authorizing the use of telehealth technology to communicate with new and existing patients during the state of emergency due to COVID-19. In recognition of the importance of oral health to overall health and the need to improve access to dental care during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maryland Department of Health authorized the use of teledentistry during the state of emergency.



Teledentistry is a method of providing oral health consultation, care, and education without the patient having to make an office visit. It enables clinicians to view a dental problem in a patient's mouth, triage dental conditions, address urgent dental issues, keep patients out of emergency rooms, or educate patients on good oral hygiene habits.

To help oral health providers implement teledentistry during the COVID-19 crisis, MDAC has developed a [teledentistry guide](#) that includes information on the state's response to COVID-19, Maryland Medicaid billing updates, regulatory issues, implementation and use of teledentistry, and teledentistry resources for dental providers. MDAC will update the guide as needed, and post the most recent version in the [COVID-19 Resources for Dental Providers/Teledentistry](#) section of the MDAC website.

MDAC thanks Virginia Health Catalyst for kindly sharing their state-specific Crisis Teledentistry Implementation Guide, which MDAC used as a template to create its guide to [Teledentistry in Maryland During COVID-19](#).

GOOD ORAL HYGIENE CAN HELP REDUCE RISK OF SERIOUS ILLNESS

Oral health linked to immune system health



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

As our society continues to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to practice good oral hygiene to help prevent you and your family from getting sick. While oral hygiene may not be at the top of people's minds right now, we know gum health is closely linked to immune system health – and we know that a compromised immune system can put someone at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

To maintain good oral health, follow the basics of good hygiene:

- Brush daily with a fluoride toothpaste: last thing at night and at least one other time during the

- day
- Drink plenty of water and reduce the amount of sugary food and drinks you consume
- Clean between your teeth every day with interdental brushes or floss
- Consider using non-alcohol mouthwash
- Avoid smoking and vaping
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Discard your toothbrush after any illness
- Replace your toothbrush at least every 3 months

Also, research concludes that the lack of sleep as well as anxiety and stress have a negative impact on oral health. During this pandemic, maintaining both good sleep habits and mental health may be more difficult to achieve.

It is recommended that an adult should try to obtain 6-7 hours of sleep daily. To relieve anxiety and stress, activities such as walking, meditation and yoga are suggested.

To seek care and guidance about dental, medical or behavioral health concerns, Telehealth (Medical, Oral Health and Behavior Health) is now available to keep you healthy. Call your providers for more information on their telehealth options, or visit the [Telehealth Virtual Resource Center](#). Citations for the information in this article can be found [here](#).

Keep calm and take care of your teeth!

HHS PROVIDES \$225M FOR COVID-19 TESTING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Maryland to receive \$49,461

Matthew Baker, Regional Director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, issued the following announcement regarding funding for COVID-19 testing on May 20, 2020:

Dear friends,

Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provided \$225 million to Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) for COVID-19 testing. These investments will support over 4,500 RHCs across the country to support COVID-19 testing efforts and expand access to testing in rural communities. Rural Health Clinics are a special designation given to health care practices in underserved rural areas by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that help ensure access to care for rural residents.



This funding is through the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act that President Trump signed into law on Friday, April 24, 2020 which specifically directed these monies to be allocated to RHCs. HRSA funded RHC organizations based on the number of certified clinic sites they operate, providing nearly \$50,000 per clinic site.

“Today’s funding provides rural health clinics with resources and flexibility to boost their testing capabilities to fight COVID-19,” said HHS Secretary Alex Azar. “Further expanding testing capacity, including at RHCs, is a crucial element of safely reopening our country and helping Americans return to work and school. A safe reopening is vital for Americans’ health and well-being, and especially so for those living in rural areas, who may have struggled with access to healthcare long before COVID-19 and found care even harder to access during this crisis.”

HRSA is also awarding \$500,000 to support technical assistance efforts to the RHCs as they expand testing capabilities. This includes activities such as conducting webinars, providing resources and guidance for implementation and management of testing programs.

To view a state-by-state breakdown of this funding, visit: <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/coronavirus/rural-health-clinics-covid-19-testing-fy20-awards>.

Best regards,

Matthew E. Baker

HHS, Regional Director, Region III

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region III – DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV

"My health plan doesn't cover dental, so I enrolled my teeth as 32 dependents, each needing a complete physical once a year."

NEWS

[Sen. Cardin Seeks Dental Insurance Coverage for Americans Displaced by COVID-19](#)

[ADA Urges CDC to Update Guidance for Dental Personnel](#)

[EPA Makes it Easier for Consumers to Find Safe, Effective Disinfectant Products to Use Against the Novel Coronavirus](#)

[Scientists Say a Now-Dominant Strain of the Coronavirus Could be More Contagious Than Original](#)

[New Data Shed Light on the Status of Reopening Dental Practices](#)

[No Longer "Business as Usual"](#)

ARTICLES

[The Impact of Coronavirus Infectious Disease 19 \(COVID-19\) on Oral Health](#)

[CDC Releases Interim Reopening Guidance for Dental Settings](#)

[Helping Patients Understand Infection Control During COVID-19](#)

[The Benefits of Preoperational Oral Rinsing During and After the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

[Dental Aerosols and Spatter Amidst COVID-19](#)

[HRSA Oral Health Workforce Projections, 2017-2030: Dentists and Dental Hygienists](#)

[The Impact of the COVID-19 Epidemic on the Utilization of Emergency Dental Services](#)

[Rural Areas Must Prepare for Long Term COVID-19](#)

[Elevating the Needs of Medicare-Medicaid Beneficiaries in the COVID-19 Era](#)

[Promoting Oral Health for Mothers and Children: A Nurse Home Visitor Education Program](#)

MD ADULT DENTAL WAIVER PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS



The Maryland Adult Dental Waiver Program is off to a terrific start! According to Maryland Medicaid, from June 1, 2019 December 31, 2019:

- **7,759 claims were submitted**
- **4,160 unique members filed valid claims**
- **280 members met annual \$800 cap**
- **546 unique providers submitted claims**
- **\$1,303,003.82 spent year-to-date**

Note: 2019 numbers have been adjusted to reflect claims received after the first of the year for services performed in 2019.

From January 1, 2020 - February 12, 2020:

- **1,021 claims were submitted**
- **814 unique members filed valid claims**
- **12 members met annual \$800 cap**
- **281 unique providers submitted claims**
- **\$173,182.00 spent year-to-date**

Following guidance from Governor Hogan in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, all elective dental procedures temporarily ceased. Although the order has since been lifted, many dental practices in the state have not yet reopened.

Governor Hogan extended teledentistry coverage to all Maryland Healthy Smiles participants. This is an exciting and innovative way to ensure people receive care during this uncertain time. MDAC will report on the impact of that coverage in the coming months.

WEBINARS

[COVID-19 Infection Control Protocols and Procedures \(Recorded\)](#)

[Economic Impact of COVID19 on Dentistry: Where Are We Heading? \(recorded\)](#)

[School-Based Health Centers in the Time of COVID-19 \(recorded\)](#)

CONTINUING EDUCATION

[Bringing Teledentistry Into Practice: Delivering Exceptional Care with Interpersonal Skills, June 2, 2020](#)

[The Power of Safe Drinking Water and Caries Prevention, July 7, 2020](#)

[Fluoridation Advocacy: How to Share Evidence-Based Findings to Lay Audiences, July 14, 2020](#)

[Mom's Guide to Fluoride, July 27, 2020](#)

[Fluoridation Public Hearings and Grassroots Campaigns, July 29, 2020](#)

[Infection Control and Preventive Care During a National Health Crisis \(recorded\)](#)

[Teledentistry: Providing Alternative Care During A Public Health Crisis \(recorded\)](#)

EVENTS

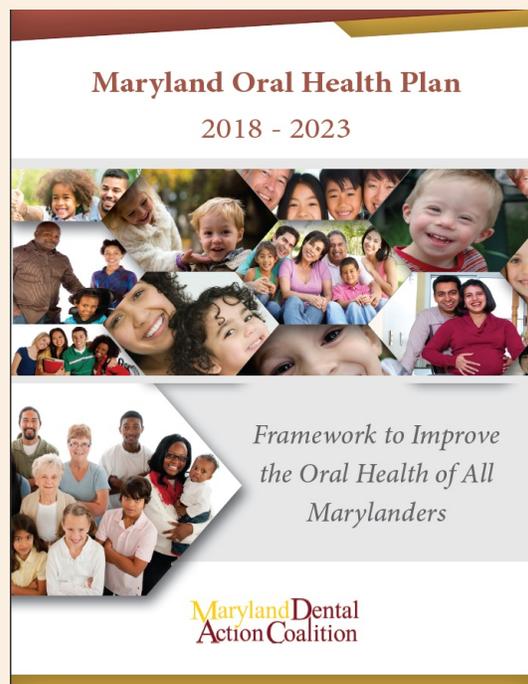
In light of federal and state actions to contain COVID-19, the events listed below may be held virtually, postponed, or cancelled. For the most up-to-date information, please check with the event sponsor.

[ADHA Annual Conference 2020, June 12-14, 2020](#)

[NHRA Health Equity Conference, June 16, 2020](#)

[Special Care Dentistry Association Annual Meeting, August 7-9, 2020](#)

[National Conference on Health](#)



The 2018-2023 Maryland Oral Health Plan outlines 11 oral health goals in three key areas:

Access to oral health care:

- All Maryland children have comprehensive dental insurance coverage through public (Medicaid/MCHP) or private insurance.
- All Maryland adults have comprehensive dental insurance coverage through Medicaid or private insurance.
- All Maryland residents have a dental home.
- Strengthen the oral health safety net provider system.
- Integrate the oral health care system within the medical health care system.

Oral disease and injury prevention:

- Use data to advance optimal oral health for all Marylanders.
- Improve public awareness of oral disease and injury prevention.
- Promote community-based oral disease and injury prevention programs.

Oral health literacy and education:

- Increase understanding of the relationship between oral health and overall health, and promote good oral health practices and access to oral health care.
- Improve collaboration between oral health and other health and human services providers so that patients understand how to navigate the oral health care system and establish a dental home.

[Communication, Marketing & Media, August 10-12, 2020](#)

[Health Literacy in Action Conference, October 18-20, 2020](#)

[Maryland Rural Health Association Annual Conference \(virtual\), October 19 - 20, 2020](#)

VIDEOS

[Fluoride in Water: An Easy Way to Protect your Teeth](#)

[Q&A: COVID-19 Transmission and Emergency Care](#)

[Hidden Pain: America's Oral Health Crisis](#)

- Educate medical professionals and students about the importance of the oral/systemic connection and foster collaboration between medical and dental disciplines and communities.

[DOWNLOAD THE PLAN](#)

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

COVID-19 RESOURCES

Visit the MDAC website for important [COVID-19 resources](#) for the public and dental providers. Information is updated regularly, so check back often!

COVID-19 RESOURCES

PATIENT RESOURCES

[Caring for Your Teeth During COVID-19](#)

[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Pennsylvania Oral Health Coalition Guide for Dental Patients During COVID-19](#)

[Oral Health Kansas Guide to Dental Visits After COVID Outbreak](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions: Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and Older Adults](#)

[Oral Health Home Habits for Healthy and Happy Smiles](#)

[CDC: What You Need to Know About Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[World Health Organization Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Advice for the Public](#)

[Maryland Public Health Association COVID-19 Resources](#)

[How Coronavirus Spreads](#)

[Coronavirus: How to Protect Yourself from COVID-19](#)

[MedChi Coronavirus Resource Center](#)

PROVIDER RESOURCES

[Public Health Foundation: COVID-19 Training Through TRAIN](#)

[Template for Patient Communications About Reopening](#)

[ADA Task Force Assembles Interim Guidance Toolkit for Dentists Returning to Work](#)

[Maryland Department of Health Coronavirus 2019 \(COVID-19\) Outbreak](#)

[Using Teledentistry to Maintain Services and Contact with Patients During the Time of COVID-19 Physical Distancing](#)

[CDC: Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response](#)

[Non-Surgical Caries Management Approaches: Treatment Recommendations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[COVID-19 Public Health Resources](#)

[COVID-19 Printable Handouts \(multiple languages\)](#)

[Talking to Kids About Coronavirus](#)

[Talking to Older Adults About Coronavirus](#)

[Tips for Oral Health Providers on Talking to Patients about COVID-19](#)

[ADA: COVID-19 State Mandates and](#)

[Social Distancing: Places And Events To Avoid Because Of Coronavirus](#)

[Self-Quarantine? Isolation? Social Distancing? What They Mean And When To Do Them](#)

[What Are the Symptoms of COVID-19?](#)

[Steps to Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 if You Are Sick](#)

[How to Prepare Your Household for Coronavirus](#)

[Emergency Preparedness Checklist](#)

[What Is a Dental Emergency?](#)

[Dr. Sanjay Gupta Shows the Proper Way to Wash Your Hands](#)

[How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)

[Social Distancing: What Does It Mean?](#)

[Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Advice for the Public: Myth Busters](#)

ORAL HEALTH POLICY

[National Council of State Legislatures: COVID-19 Resources for State Legislators and Staff](#)

[Public Policy Partners COVID-19 Resources](#)

[Oral Health Care Access in the COVID-19 Era and Beyond](#)

[State Health Coverage Strategies for COVID-19](#)

[Bridging Health Equity and Racial Justice During COVID-19 and Beyond](#)

[Families USA Digital Toolkit: COVID-19 Related Resources](#)

Medicaid

[Translating COVID-19's Impact on Medicaid Policy](#)

[Rising Medicaid Rolls: COVID-19's Impact on Medicaid Enrollment and State Budgets](#)

[Medicaid's Role in the Next Phase of](#)

Recommendations

[ADA: What Constitutes a Dental Emergency?](#)

[ADA: Interim Mask and Face Shield Guidelines](#)

[ADA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Center for Dentists](#)

[ADA Releases Coronavirus Handout for Dentists Based On CDC Guidelines](#)

[COVID-19 Coding and Billing Interim Guidance](#)

[How Do I Ethically Continue to See Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemic?](#)

[CDC: Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings](#)

[CMS: FAQs on Catastrophic Plan Coverage and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[CMS: Adult Elective Surgery and Procedures Recommendations](#)

[CMS: Coverage and Payment Related to COVID-19 - Medicare](#)

[CMS: Current Emergencies](#)

[American Chemistry Council: EPA Approved COVID-19 Fighting Products](#)

[Medicare Telemedicine Health Care Provider Fact Sheet](#)

[COVID-19 Economic Impact on Dental Practices](#)

[NNOHA COVID-19 Resources](#)

[OSHA Guidance Summary: Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

[AIDPH COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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

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

[Maryland State Legislators](#)

SUPPORT MDAC

[COVID-19 Response: Part I](#)

[Policy Cheat Sheet: Translating COVID-19's Impact on Medicaid Policy](#)

[Protecting the Progress Made Expanding Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits](#)

[Medicaid's Role in the Next Phase of COVID-19 Response: Part II— Reopening the Health Care Delivery System](#)

[Addressing the Needs of the Medicaid Population During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[How Should Medicaid Health Plans Respond to COVID-19?](#)



Give a little to make a big impact! Your gifts, both large and small, will be used to promote good oral health behaviors, prevent oral disease and injury, and improve access to oral health care for all Marylanders, no matter where they live or what their special circumstances might be. Please help us continue this important work.

DONATE NOW!

MDAC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and contributions to support its activities are most appreciated. Thank you.

RURAL HEALTH

[Rural Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[NRHA COVID-19 Resources](#)



MDAC is pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Deborah Rodriguez, DDS - University of Maryland School of Dentistry

Join us! To become a 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 MDAC

www.mdac.us

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