

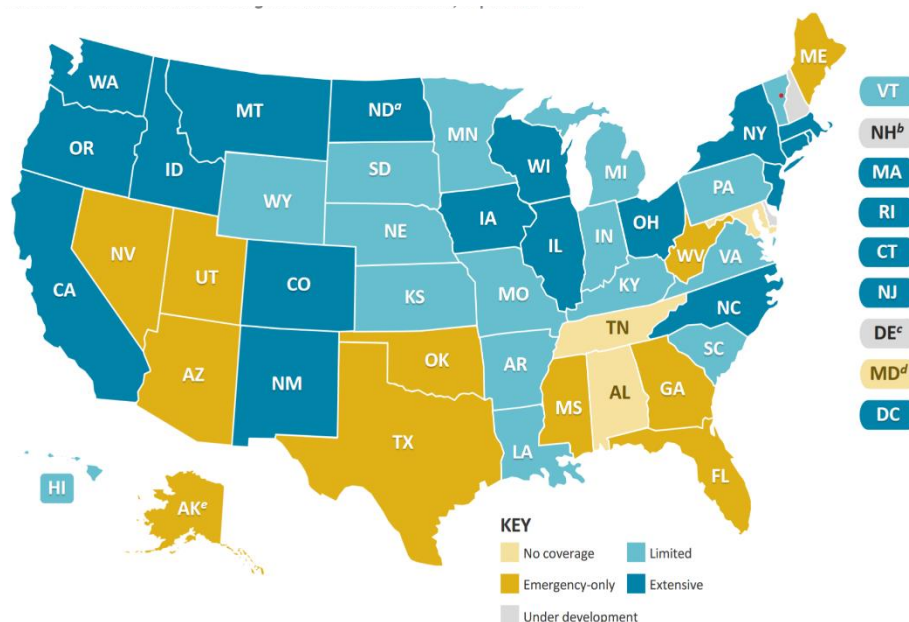
It's Time to Close the Gap. Dental Care is Health Care.

## Support Adult Dental Coverage in Maryland Medicaid

### Maryland is just one of three states without adult dental coverage in Medicaid

Maryland is behind almost every other state in dental coverage in Medicaid. Over thirty other states provide comprehensive or limited adult dental coverage in their programs. The remaining states provide some dental coverage to most adults in their programs in emergency situations – except for the three states of Maryland, Alabama, and Tennessee.

#### State Medicaid Coverage of Adult Dental Benefits. September 2019



Source: Center for Health Care Strategies [https://www.chcs.org/media/Adult-Oral-Health-Fact-Sheet\\_091519.pdf](https://www.chcs.org/media/Adult-Oral-Health-Fact-Sheet_091519.pdf)

Maryland has pockets of adult coverage in Medicaid: dually eligible adults under the age of 65, pregnant and postpartum individuals, and young adults who have aged out of foster care. Managed care organizations may provide some basic benefits – but Maryland law does not require it, so that it could change at any time. This means that 800,000 adults are left without a reliable source of adult dental coverage that meets their needs for basic preventative and restorative services.

## Dental coverage can transform the life of someone you know

One in four Marylanders<sup>i</sup> is covered by Medicaid. We all know someone who is covered by Medicaid, and that person may be a friend, family member, or even ourselves. Dental care can transform lives. If someone suffers from poor oral health, they may face many struggles, including:

- managing dental pain;
- controlling a chronic disease;
- obtaining a job; or
- even eating.

Dental coverage can mean the difference between suffering and living a productive life for many Marylanders.

## Dental coverage is not a Medicaid cost. It's an investment.

There is a reason that a majority of states provide dental coverage to adults in their Medicaid program. Health care cannot be delivered effectively without dental care. The lack of adult dental coverage drives up health care costs and contributes to health disparities, making it difficult to keep our communities healthy:

- People go to emergency rooms because they can't get preventative dental care. This costs \$10 million a year for Maryland Medicaid.<sup>ii</sup>
- Basic dental care can lower cost of managing chronic diseases, saving \$236 for each preventative dental visit.<sup>iii</sup>

States can leverage federal investment of millions of dollars, and Maryland is leaving that investment on the table. Federal dollars pay for at least half of Medicaid.

## What you can do to help

With 2022 legislation in the Maryland, we can make adult dental coverage in Medicaid a reality for Marylanders. Please join the Maryland Dental Action Coalition in pledging your support:

<https://www.mdac.us/initiatives/medicaid-adult-dental-benefit/medicaid-adult-dental-benefits/>

## DENTAL CARE IS HEALTH CARE FOR MARYLANDERS

"I am insured through Maryland Medicaid. I got dental coverage through a special waiver program in 2019. For the first time in 20 years, I have been able to see a dentist regularly. I now feel healthy and confident. But I am one of the lucky ones. Thousands of other adults in Medicaid are suffering and deserve coverage."

G. Graves  
Medicaid Consumer  
Washington County

After Deamonte Driver's death, Maryland has done a tremendous job at improving dental access for children. But our state has left behind parents, grandparents, and adult family members. Maryland is just one of three states without adult dental coverage in Maryland. This is unconscionable. The health of our state depends on the health of the entire family. We need to do better."

Dr. Jonelle  
Anamelechi  
Pediatric Dentist  
Prince George's  
County



**The Maryland Dental Action Coalition and the following organizations and individuals support adult dental coverage in Maryland Medicaid:**

ORGANIZATIONS

American College of Nurse Midwives – Maryland Affiliate  
American Dental Hygienist Association  
Area Health Education Center West  
Baltimore City Substance Abuse Directorate  
Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition  
Bay Community Health  
BH Health Services, Inc.  
Biotechnology Health Management & Care, LLC  
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health  
Chesapeake Voyagers, Inc.  
Clinical Management and Development Services  
Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center  
GSK Consumer Healthcare  
Health Care for the Homeless  
Hilda's Place Behavioral Health Organization  
Institute for Behavioral Resources, Inc.  
James' Place, Inc.  
Legal Action Center  
Maryland Academy of Advanced Practice Clinicians  
Maryland Addictions Directors Council  
Maryland Assembly for School Based Health Care  
Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependency  
Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition  
Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Maryland Coalition of Families  
Maryland Community Health Systems  
Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine  
Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition  
Maryland Nurses Association

### ORGANIZATIONS (continued)

Maryland Occupational Therapy Association  
Maryland Public Health Association  
Mary's Center  
MDHA Dental Hygiene Well Being Committee  
Medicalincs  
Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers  
National Association of Social Workers - Maryland  
National Council of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of Maryland  
New Life Recovery Center  
Northern Parkway Treatment Service  
OCA/Soul Haven  
On Our Own of Carroll County  
On Our Own of Howard County  
Peer Wellness and Recovery Services  
Planned Parenthood of Maryland  
On Our Own of Maryland  
Public Justice Center  
The Coordinating Center  
The Maryland State Medical Society  
Voices of Hope, Inc.  
Wellness and Recovery Community Center, Charles County Freedom Landing, Inc.  
Y of Central Maryland

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<sup>i</sup> Extrapolated from September 2021 Medicaid enrollment figures presented at October 2021 Medicaid Advisory Committee meeting and 2020 Census <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/pop.html>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.mdac.us/file\\_download/inline/2ed08573-f47a-47b4-a535-4bffd815823e](https://www.mdac.us/file_download/inline/2ed08573-f47a-47b4-a535-4bffd815823e)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/00220345211007448>