



TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Pat Young

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
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DATE: March 3, 2020

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 921 – *Dentists – Saliva Lead Poisoning Screening Tests – Scope of Practice and Requirements*

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **opposition** for House Bill 921.

House Bill 921 would authorize dentists to collect oral saliva samples to screen for lead poisoning. While all children between 6 months and 6 years of age should be checked for lead, the initial screening for children must be done with a screening tool that is recognized as an accurate and evidence-based tool for lead screening if there is to be confidence that high lead levels will be appropriately identified. If through screening it is determined a child may have been exposed to lead, blood lead level testing will be conducted to determine the level of lead and appropriate interventions for the child. Saliva screening is not recognized as a proven tool for screening and if authorized could provide inaccurate indications of the need for further testing. No other State has authorized the use of saliva lead poisoning screening.

MDAAP has a long history of working with local and state health officials to increase lead screening rates in children. While well-intentioned, given the need for comprehensive lead testing, passage of House Bill 921 will not advance the objectives of a strong lead poisoning prevention and intervention program and may in fact undermine those objectives. An unfavorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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