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**Committee:** Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**Bill Number:** SB 777

**Title:** Public Health – Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Grant Program Fund

**Hearing Date:** February 24, 2021

**Position:** Support with Technical Amendments

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The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 777 – Public Health – Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Grant Program Fund*. This bill would enhance the Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Coordination Services Grant Program by making funds available to federally qualified health centers and other practitioners to provide services related to prenatal care.

MDAC supports the establishment of a grant program to support prenatal services offered by trusted community providers. Not all individuals with lower incomes qualify for the Maryland Medicaid Program. Without coverage, pregnant women may not be able to get the services needed for a healthy pregnancy and birth. Expanding prenatal service will help Maryland address health disparities. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, “Black and Hispanic women are at significantly higher risk for severe maternal morbidity, such as preeclampsia, which is significantly more common than maternal death.”<sup>i</sup>

MDAC requests a technical amendment to clarify that grant funds could cover oral health services if needed to maintain a healthy pregnancy. According to a recent analysis of 23 systemic reviews, researchers “found strong evidence for an association between periodontal disease and various adverse pregnancy outcomes.”<sup>ii</sup>

We ask for a favorable report with technical amendments on this critical piece of legislation. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

***Optimal Oral Health for All Marylanders***

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<sup>i</sup> Artiga, Samantha et al. "Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health: An Overview. Kaiser Family Foundation. November 10, 2020. [h/ttps://www.kff.org/report-section/racial-disparities-in-maternal-and-infant-health-an-overview-issue-brief](https://www.kff.org/report-section/racial-disparities-in-maternal-and-infant-health-an-overview-issue-brief)

<sup>ii</sup> Daalderop LA, Wieland BV, Tomsin K, et al. Periodontal Disease and Pregnancy Outcomes: Overview of Systematic Reviews. JDR Clinical & Translational Research. 2018;3(1):10-27. doi:10.1177/2380084417731097

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