



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc
2101 East Jefferson Street
Rockville, Maryland 20852

January 19, 2021

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building Room 240
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 368 – Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Committee:

Kaiser Permanente is pleased to support HB 368 – “Task Force on Oral Health in Maryland”

Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia.¹ Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, which operates in Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for approximately 775,000 members. In Maryland, we deliver care to over 450,000 members.

Kaiser Permanente supports the establishment of a Task Force focused on oral health. Research has confirmed a direct correlation between oral health and overall wellness. Gum disease is linked to a host of chronic illnesses including heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis. Statistics reveal those with gum disease are twice as likely to suffer a fatal heart attack and three times as likely to have a stroke. In pregnant women, poor oral health has also been associated with premature births and low birth weight. In 2007, only 44.5% of people aged 2 and older had a dental visit in the past 12 months, a rate that has remained essentially consistent over the past decade.

If this bill is enacted, we would seek a seat on the Task Force.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact Allison Taylor at Allison.W.Taylor@kp.org or (202) 924-7496 with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wayne D. Wilson".

Wayne D. Wilson
Vice President, Government Programs and External Relations
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Mid-Atlantic States, Inc.

¹ Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 39 hospitals and over 650 other clinical facilities; and the Permanente Medical Groups, self-governed physician group practices that exclusively contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and its health plan subsidiaries to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente’s members.