



# MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

## Health and Government Operations Committee

January 19, 2021

### HB 368: Task Force on Oral Health in Maryland

Position: Support



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The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). As such, the DD Coalition supports HB 368.



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A lack of comprehensive oral health services is of great concern to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Access to health care, including oral health care is a basic need.

#### WHY is this legislation important?

- Many people with significant disabilities have Medicaid as their health insurance, which only covers basic cleaning two times per year and simple extractions.
- Many people with significant disabilities rely on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as their main or sole source of income.
- People with disabilities are unemployed at a much higher rate than the general population, resulting in much lower income and fewer employee benefits. According to the U.S. Dept. Of Labor, 18.7% of people with disabilities are working compared to 65.7% of people without disabilities.



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#### WHAT does this legislation do?

This bill establishes the Task Force on Oral Health in Maryland. The task force must:

- Analyze current access to dental services in the State, with a focus on residents affected by poverty, disabilities, or aging.
- Identify areas of the State where a significant number of residents are not receiving oral health care services, distinguishing between pediatric and adult populations.
- Identify barriers to receiving dental services in areas in need and analyze the specific impact of such barriers.
- Assess options to eliminate such barriers, including the feasibility of establishing a program for dental therapy in the State.
- Make recommendations to increase access to dental services in the State.



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There aren't enough dentists willing to accept Medicaid to meet demand, and often dentists and dental hygienists lack sufficient training to provide their services to people with significant support needs; this means that people with disabilities may have difficulty locating dentists.

**The DD Coalition supports HB 368 because this task force is a critical step towards removing some of the barriers to oral health care for people with developmental disabilities.**



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