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**Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**  
**Senate Bill 856 - Public Schools - Health Services - School Nurses**  
**March 8, 2022**  
**Support**

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 856 – Public Schools – Health Services – School Nurses*. The bill would require schools to have at least one full-time nurse.

MDAC supports measures to ensure the overall health, including oral health of children. Dental caries, also known as cavities, is one of the most common diseases afflicting a student population with 20% of children between the ages of 5 and 11 having at least one untreated cavity.<sup>i</sup> In the Maryland Oral Health Plan 2018-2023, a primary goal is to “increase the number of school-based dental screening and sealant programs.”<sup>ii</sup> To achieve this goal, MDAC collaborated with the Office of Oral Health at the Maryland Department of Health to conduct an assessment of dental sealant programs. The results of that assessment made clear that school nurses are essential:

*“Throughout the survey, responses highlighted the extremely vital role that nurses play within dental sealant programs. If there was a “champion” for a dental sealant program within the school, it was the nurse, and nurses were involved in various parts of coordinating and implementing sealant programs.”<sup>iii</sup>”*

MDAC asks for a favorable report. School nurses are the key to ensuring students are healthy and safe. All Maryland students deserve a nurse in their school who ensures that their somatic, behavioral, and oral health needs are met. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Suhani Chitalia at [schitalia@policypartners.net](mailto:schitalia@policypartners.net).

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

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/childrens-oral-health/index.html>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.mdac.us/file\\_download/inline/de993e4e-e717-45b4-aff0-435d29cf4c8e](https://www.mdac.us/file_download/inline/de993e4e-e717-45b4-aff0-435d29cf4c8e)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://files.constantcontact.com/f29af31a201/0edc26fb-bb6c-41a7-8e05-28f56f5ecb6d.pdf>

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