



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: Senate Bill 150 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults

SPONSOR: Senators Augustine & Guzzone

HEARING DATE: January 25, 2022

COMMITTEE: Finance

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 150**, which would allow Maryland Medicaid to cover “comprehensive dental care” for low-income adults. The dental coverage would be “subject to the limitations of the state budget”. Prince George's County strongly supports this expansion and recommends amendment to remove “limitations,” instead fully funding this critical legislation.

SB150 would increase access to dental care for low-income adults in Maryland. The Prince George's County Health Department dental clinic is currently unable to see adult residents because treatment is costly and reimbursement from Medicaid is unreliable. **SB150** would allow the Health Department, and many other community dental clinics, to serve adults at or below 133% Federal Poverty Level.

Residents who are unable to access affordable dental services are more likely to have severe outcomes including abscess and infection, and to seek treatment for these complications with expensive emergency room visits.¹ Even for those without emergency dental needs, chronic diseases can be exacerbated by oral health challenges like periodontitis (gum disease).² Oral inflammation and infection have been linked to diabetes, heart disease, and cognitive impairment.³ Ensuring access to

¹ National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. December 2021. *Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges. Section 1: Effect of Oral Health on the Community, Overall Well-Being, and the Economy.* <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/Effect-Oral-Health-on-the-Community-Overall-Well-Being-and-the-Economy.pdf>

² National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. December 2021. *Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges. Section 3A: Oral Health Across the Lifespan, Working Age Adults.* <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/Oral-Health-Across-the-Lifespan-Working-age-Adults.pdf>

³ Ibid

routine and emergency dental services will improve overall health for low-income adults.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 150** to strengthen the bill's impact and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.