



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 6
Title: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults
Hearing Date: February 9, 2022
Position: Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) supports *House Bill 6 – Maryland Medical Assistance Programs – Dental Coverage for Adults*. The bill establishes dental coverage for all adults in Medicaid.

Maryland is just one of three states that does not provide some level of dental coverage for adults, except for a few pockets of coverage.ⁱ In November 2021, Medicaid took a step forward by extending dental coverage to individuals in the postpartum care. This recent step is a significant improvement, but not enough. Most adults still lack dental coverage in the Medicaid program.

Dental coverage is critical for the health of the individual, and the health of their families:

- In a recent study, researchers found that untreated carries dropped by 5% when the parents had dental coverage for one year in the Medicaid programⁱⁱ.
- Poor oral health and periodontal disease are associated with other health issues, specifically coronary heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and liver disease. A peer-reviewed study found that people with severe periodontal disease were up to 1.4 times more likely to have chronic health conditions compared to people without periodontal diseaseⁱⁱⁱ

ACNM asks that Maryland keep moving forward in expanding access to dental care. We request a favorable vote on House Bill 6. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ https://www.chcs.org/media/Adult-Oral-Health-Fact-Sheet_091519.pdf

ⁱⁱ The Association Between Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage And Children's Oral Health. Lipton et al. Health Affairs 2021 40:11, 1731-1739

ⁱⁱⁱ Bensley L, VanEenwyk J, Ossiander EM. Associations of self-reported periodontal disease with metabolic syndrome and number of self-reported chronic conditions. Preventing Chronic Disease 2011;8(3):A50.