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## Written Testimony in Support of 2022 HB 6

### Maryland Medical Assistance Program- Dental Coverage for Adults

Madam Chair and members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee. My name is Dr. Charles Doring and I am providing written testimony in support of SB 150. I am a general dentist in Montgomery County, a Maryland Health Smiles (Medicaid) provider, and chair of the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) Legislative Affairs Committee. I am also a Member of the Maryland Health Smiles Advisory Board and a member of Maryland Task Force on Oral Health.

Providing quality dental care to Marylanders, particularly our most vulnerable, has been a top priority of organized dentistry for a long time. We encourage members to participation in the Maryland Health Smiles program, provide gratis care through the Maryland Foundation of Dentistry, as well as organize Mission of Mercy events across the State. Even with this involvement, barriers to dental care remain. Many of Maryland most poor do not have a dental home to seek routine comprehensive dental care. This segment of population either visits local hospital emergency departments, waits for the next charitable dental event or suffers in pain. At a Mission of Mercy event, one adult patient health history revealed a recent week-long hospital stay (paid with Medicaid funds) for an infection of "unknown origin", treated with antibiotics and discharged. At the Mission of Mercy event shortly afterward her hospitalization, this adult patient was diagnosed with an untreated abscessed tooth. The Medicaid cost for a week-long hospital stay greatly outpaces the cost of a tooth extraction.

While we greatly appreciate the giant step forward that HB 6 provides in "comprehensive dental care", MSDA wants to be assured of a robust network of dental team members are ready in place to treat this new wide pool of patients. To get a deep pool of dentists to provide the needed care, the MSDA would like to remind legislators and government officials that Maryland's Dental Medicaid fee schedule has not been adjusted in 12 years. No provider fee increases despite increased costs associated with providing the care (particularly during Covid-19) and retaining talented clinical support staff makes recruiting new dentist Medicaid providers or retaining current Medicaid providers a challenge. Many potential providers are disheartened by the complicated Medicaid sign up process (e-Prep) and just give up. For a win for patients as well as a win for Medicaid dental providers, administration of comprehensive adult dental plan must be efficient, transparent and welcome provider/patient input. Passage of HB 6 will go far to set Maryland on the right track to setting the standard for quality dental care for all.

I thank you for the opportunity to discuss HB 150 with you and I ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Doring DDS