



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 Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) supports *House Bill 6 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults*. The bill establishes dental coverage for adults with Medicaid. Maryland is just one of three states without some form of dental coverage for most adults.ⁱ

LCPCM supports Medicaid dental coverage because there is a strong correlation between oral health and behavioral health, including conditions such as depression.ⁱⁱ In a white paper on the integration of oral and behavioral health, national policy analysts noted that, “Poor oral health can create or exacerbate problems with mental health, self-esteem, cognitive health, substance use and impede social functioning in areas such as employability and school engagement”ⁱⁱⁱ

As Maryland continues to work to improve access to behavioral health, we should not leave dental care behind. Oral health and behavioral health are both part of overall health. Please move Maryland forward by voting favorably on this legislation to establish adult coverage in Medicaid. If we can provide any further information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.

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

ⁱⁱ O'Neil A, Berk M, Venugopal K, Kim SW, Williams LJ, Jacka FN. The association between poor dental health and depression: findings from a large-scale, population-based study (the NHANES study). *Gen Hosp Psychiatry*. 2014 May-Jun;36(3):266-70.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bowling J, Matulis R. Oral Health, Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment: A Framework for Increased Coordination and Integration. National Council for Mental Wellbeing's Center of Excellence for Integrated Health Solutions; 2021.