



COMMISSION ON AGING

February 3, 2022

Delegate Bonnie Cullison
312 Lowe House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
bonnie.cullison@house.state.md.us

RE: HB006 Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Coverage for Adults

Dear Delegate Cullison,

I am writing on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission on Aging to express our strong support for HB006. A primary area of our concern is the protection and support for vulnerable older adults. The Montgomery County Commission on Aging (COA) is authorized by the Older Americans Act, P.L. 116-131, and was established by Montgomery County in 1974 to advise County government on the needs, interests and issues of Older Adult residents, and to advocate on their behalf at the local, state and national levels.

HB006 requires the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to give Maryland adults whose annual household income is at or below 133 percent of the poverty level comprehensive dental care. Studies show people who get regular dental care are less prone to cardiovascular disease, mental health disorders, type 2 diabetes, and cancer.

Maryland is only one of three states that do not have Medicaid coverage for dental care. This impacts the health of 800,000 Marylanders. With a Budget Surplus of over \$4.3 billion dollars, there is an opportunity to add dental benefits with a financial impact of 1 to 2% to the Budget surplus.

The Hilltop report on Adult Dental Coverage in Maryland Medicaid states there are multiple sources of financial cost offsets. Savings may be achieved from the reductions in the use of Emergency Departments for dental complaints as enrollees receive dental care from a regular, non-ED dental provider. There will be reductions in the severity of dental complaints as enrollees utilize preventive dental services and avoid the need for restorative services. There will be cost savings by the reduction in the use of safety net dental providers, such as local health department dental clinics and reductions in utilization and severity of health conditions related to oral health.

Providing the access to comprehensive dental care through the passage of HB006 can have significant impact on quality of life factors, reduce emergency care costs dramatically, and improve the lives of our most vulnerable older Maryland citizens. We thank you for introducing HB006. We urge a favorable report.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Selter, Chair
Commission on Aging

cc: Senator Malcolm Augustine
Senator Guy Guzzone
Montgomery County Delegation
Leslie Frey

Department of Health and Human Services

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