

## Oral Health Environmental Scan 2021

### Executive Summary

Good oral health is essential to good overall health and well-being at every stage of life, and particularly during early childhood when many health-related habits are established. However, due to a lack of access to care, nearly one in four U.S. children 2-5 years of age experience dental caries on their primary teeth. Dental caries remain predominantly prevalent among children living with limited family resources. The goal of the TOHF project is to improve the oral health of children 0–40 months through the integration of preventive oral health services into primary care settings in community health centers in Maryland, Virginia, New York, and the District of Columbia. Medical-dental integration, also known as interprofessional practice, integrates and coordinates dental care into primary care and behavioral health, increasing opportunity to access oral health services and supporting individual and population health for better patient outcomes. This scan is specifically designed to identify areas of opportunity to advance medical-dental integration.

### Access to Oral Health Services

#### Percentage of Children Enrolled in Medicaid with One or More Dental Visits in CY2019<sup>1</sup>

Age Group (Years)	Percentage	% Increase from CY2015
0-3	32.0%	+3.1%
4-5	66.6%	+1.9%
6-9	70.7%	+2.7%
10-14	67.0%	+4.2%
15-18	57.3%	+5.7%
19-20	38.9%	+4.9%
All Ages	56.7%	+3.9%

### Oral Health Scopes of Practice

- ↔ Dental hygienists can prescribe a limited list of medications, including topical fluorides and ibuprofen.
- ↔ Dental hygienists can practice in physician offices that provide primary and/or prenatal care, as well as medical day, and group home settings under general supervision.
- ↔ Acting Maryland Health Secretary, Dennis R. Shrader, issued an order on December 8th, 2020 that allows all health care practitioners, including dentists, dental hygienists, and dental radiation technologists, to administer any FDA approved COVID-19 vaccine.

- ↔ Dental therapists are not authorized to practice in the state of Maryland, but are able to practice in other states.

### Teledentistry

- ↔ In response to the pandemic, Governor Hogan signed legislation authorizing all licensed practitioners to provide telehealth/teledental services under their respective licensure laws permanently.
- ↔ Maryland Medicaid provides reimbursement for synchronous teledentistry services, including problem-focused oral evaluation and treatment.

### Fluoride Varnish

- ↔ Maryland Medicaid reimburses EPSDT medical providers for 4 fluoride varnish applications per year. Medicaid requires fluoride varnish applications by medical providers be combined with either an oral health service or well-child visit to be eligible for reimbursement.
- ↔ Maryland requires non-dental clinical providers who apply fluoride varnish to complete a one-time online training course.
- ↔ Anyone who can administer an immunization can apply fluoride varnish. However, only physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners can bill for the service due to the requirement for an EPSDT credential.

## Community Water Fluoridation

- ↔ In 2020, 94.7% of Marylanders with public water received fluoridated water, which exceeds the Health People 2030 goal of 77.1%<sup>2</sup>.

## Future Strategies

- ↔ Expand oral health equity through a comprehensive adult dental benefit in the Maryland Medicaid program.
- ↔ Advocate to expand dental hygienists' scope of practice to include working under general supervision in the offices of nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, and birthing centers.
- ↔ Work with public and private medical and dental clinicians, home visitors, WIC, and Early Head Start to ensure pregnant people are aware of and can access the new 12-month Medicaid postpartum dental benefit.
- ↔ Work with the state oral health department to update and distribute the state's oral health pregnancy guidelines to include the new postpartum dental coverage.

## Resources

<sup>1</sup> [2020 Annual Oral Health Legislative Report, Health General Article, Section 13-2504\(b\) and HB 70 \(Chapter 656 of the Acts of 2009\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy People 2030 Objectives and Data: <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/health-policy/increase-proportion-people-whose-water-systems-have-recommended-amount-fluoride-oh-11>

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## NOHI Project

To learn more about the NOHI project, please visit [www.mchoralhealth.org/pdfs/nohi-overview-profiles.pdf](http://www.mchoralhealth.org/pdfs/nohi-overview-profiles.pdf)

## Disclaimer

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