

# SCHWARTZ, METZ & WISE, P.A.

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair  
Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Ariana Kelly

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: February 18, 2014

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 792 – *Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Dental Services for Postpartum Women – Coverage*

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On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Maryland Section (MDACOG), we support House Bill 792.

House Bill 792 proposes to extend current Medicaid dental benefits for pregnant women to 90 days postpartum under certain circumstances. Maryland has long recognized the benefits of health care coverage for low-income pregnant woman. Maryland's Medicaid eligibility limit for pregnant woman is 250% of poverty – higher than that for other adults. This higher eligibility threshold is critical to ensure access to prenatal care services to Maryland's most vulnerable women which directly leads to improved birth outcomes and health status of the mother. A healthy mother is better able to care for her child after delivery.

Currently, Medicaid coverage for pregnant women includes dental services during the course of pregnancy. However, it does not accommodate the potential need to complete a course of treatment postpartum. House Bill 792 corrects that limitation by extending benefits for 90 days postpartum, but only in cases where the woman has a planned course of treatment developed by a dentist during her pregnancy and the course of treatment is completed within 90 days of delivery. This small, but targeted, benefit enhancement for a limited number of women could be critical to the health of both mothers and their babies. As this General Assembly is well aware – based on previous cases – oral health is a critical component of the overall health of an individual and should not be undervalued. Providing this enhanced benefit will undoubtedly result in cost savings that far exceed the fiscal impact of this legislation.

On behalf of the above named organizations a favorable report is requested.

**For more information call:**

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