

Pathway to Help Get *Oral Health Education* *Legislation Passed in Your State*©

Presented by



2012-2013

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“The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.”
— Henry A. Kissinger



Maryland Dental Society



Maryland State Dental Association



The Children's Oral Health Institute



Foreword

Dear Colleagues, Educators, Friends, Legislators, and Stakeholders:

We realize that much has been done nationally to improve oral health. However, we believe this education in public school classroom will achieve long-term disease prevention outcomes that can last a lifetime. Therefore, we appreciate your willingness to consider taking the necessary steps to get oral health education legislation passed in your state.

It is up to all of us to use our fortitude to relieve the dental pain too often experienced by schoolchildren so they can focus on learning. The 2012 Oral Health Education-Certification and Monitoring law in Maryland, created by dental professionals, teachers, legislative leaders, policy makers and parents, is a pathway for you to follow and duplicate. This *Pathway to Help Get Oral Health Education Legislation Passed in Your State* may prove to be a useful guide.

In Maryland, we have demonstrated that our solidarity is making a meaningful difference toward relieving the oral health crisis in our classrooms. The step-by-step process described on the following pages is designed to walk you through how your association or society can make oral health education a reality in your state's public schools. This collaboration between organized dentistry in your state and your state's department of education is especially meaningful at a time when millions of children are poised to gain access to preventive services and comprehensive care via the Affordable Care Act. If we act now, the country will be well on its way to achieving this important goal by 2014.

The aim of this presentation is to offer relevant scientific information that demonstrates why we need to incorporate oral health education into classroom instruction. It describes an evidenced-based approach to oral health care. (See the ADA Center for Evidence-Based Dentistry™ at <http://ebd.ada.org>).

We appreciate your attention to our efforts and are eager to work with you. We have provided you all of the information that helped us navigate the political landscape and achieve success in Maryland during the 2012 legislative session. Your timely commitment is important if we are to move forward successfully and improve the oral health of your state and our country. Our contact information is located on page 25. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Sincerely,



Willie J. Richardson, DDS
President
Maryland Dental Society



Winifred J. Booker, DDS
CEO & Director of Development
The Children's Oral Health Institute



Diane Romaine, DDS
Immediate Past President
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Karyn Carr Porter, RDH, BS
President
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Introduction

The *Pathway to Help Get Oral Health Education Legislation Passed in Your State* records the collaboration that began on October 3, 2008, when organized dentistry met with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The meeting was convened to discuss Maryland's current public school curriculum requirement for oral health education instruction. Organized dentistry appealed to the MSDE to have oral health taught for 1 hour in grades K through 12. In 2008 Maryland only required 1 hour of oral health education instruction in 2nd grade and ½ half hour between grades 9 and 12.

The advocates who appealed for oral health to be taught in all 13 grades were members of the Maryland Dental Society (MDS), the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA), the Maryland Academy of General Dentistry, the Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (MdAPD), the National Dental Association (NDA), the Children's Oral Health Institute, the Baltimore Teacher's Union, and KEH Communications. While there continued to be dialogue between dental professionals and school educators, it was not until March 22, 2012, that testimony was heard by the Maryland Senate for the inclusion of oral health instruction in the public school curriculum.

Prior to the Senate hearing, state legislators were contacted and the initial appeal was made for support of an oral health education bill in early January 2012. The legislation was sponsored by Baltimore City's 43rd District Senator Joan Carter Conway, Chair of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee. The first written draft of the bill was offered by dental professionals at the request of Senator Carter Conway. Though members of organized dentistry anticipated a more robust legislation after the Senate revisions, they came to terms with the language in the final bill draft, Senate Bill 867. Dental professionals, educators and other stakeholders felt the obliging wording of the bill would help acceptably gauge the moral compass for oral health education in public schools.

The Maryland Dental Society, the Maryland State Dental Association, the National Dental Association, the Baltimore Teacher's Union, the University of Maryland Department of Dental Hygiene, the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Prince George's County Health Department, and The Children's Oral Health Institute prepared written testimony and gave oral testimony to the state Senate.

Senate Bill 867 was identically cross-filed as House Bill 1401 via Delegate Nathaniel T. Oaks Baltimore City's 41st District and re-referred to the House Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Delegate Sheila E. Hixson, District 20, Montgomery County. Members of organized dentistry again testified, as did educators, providing written and oral testimony to members of the House Ways and Means Committee.

To help ensure support for the legislation, Congressman Elijah Cummings was asked to consider providing a letter of support for the bill. In his letter to Senator Joan Carter Conway, Cummings wrote, "I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 867/State Department of Education—Oral Health Education and Monitoring. This bill recognizes the importance of dental health literacy by requiring instruction in oral disease prevention in Maryland schools. This effort helps to underscore the relationship between dental care and overall health and wellness."

Letters of support were also provided by the top leadership of the National Dental Association and Dr. Joseph Berk, a pediatrician and attending at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Others letters were included from the Advocates for Children and Youth, the Maryland Dental Action Coalition, and the National Alliance of Black School Educators. All of the written testimony was compiled in a folder and provided to Senate and House members.

In addition to the testimonies, and the letters of support provided in the presentation folders, we provided a variety of oral health education materials. A copy of *Code Red: The Oral Health Crisis in Your Classroom®: Empowering the Teacher to Teach Oral Health Education—a Curriculum Resource Reference* was included as the focal point. This booklet highlights the need for oral health education legislation and provides information and instructional material on how oral health can be incorporated into already approved lesson plans. The comprehensively packaged folders, provided to support the oral health education bill, were distributed to every member of the Senate and the House during the hearings.

On May 22, 2012, the Oral Health Education—Certification and Monitoring Bill was signed into law by Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley. Mr. Ralph Fuccillo, president of the DentaQuest Foundation, traveled from Boston to Annapolis for the signing event. Members of the Maryland Dental Society, the Maryland State Dental Association, the Maryland Academy of General Dentistry, the Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the Maryland Dental Action Coalition, and The Children's Oral Health Institute were at the Maryland State House to witness the signing. Dr. Harry Goodman, Director of Oral Health for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene said, "This legislation adds to the efforts by schools and the dental community to help eliminate oral health disparities and improve dental health education for Maryland's schoolchildren."

The *Pathway to Help Get Oral Health Education Legislation Passed in Your State* offers guidance that may be useful to other states. This outlined approach provides examples of how we developed oral health lesson guides, crafted legislative testimony, created talking points, proposed meeting strategies, and composed helpful communications. It is the start-to-finish record of the steps that afforded the *Oral Health Education-Certification and Monitoring* legislation a success for schoolchildren in Maryland.

Visit the National Governors Association website to read the position paper they have developed, *Maryland Passes Oral Health Education Legislation through Collaborative Approach*. Go to <http://statepolicyoptions.nga.org/casestudy/maryland-passes-oral-health-education-legislation-through-collaborative-approach>.

Link to organized dentistry's *Pathway to Help Get Oral Health Education Legislation Passed in Your State*. The links can be accessed via our websites, including Advocates for Children and Youth, www.acy.org; The Children's Oral Health Institute, www.mycohi.org; the Maryland Dental Society, www.themds.org; the Maryland State Dental Association, www.msda.com; the Maryland Academy of General Dentistry, www.maryland-agd.org; the Maryland Dental Action Coalition, www.mdac.us; the Maryland Dental Hygienists' Association, www.mymdha.org; the National Dental Association, www.ndaonline.org and the Prince George's County Health Department, Department of Dentistry, www.princegeorgescountymd.gov.

STEP 1 Building Legislative Relationships to Elevate Oral Health

While we understand that our elected officials serve at the pleasure of the people, their success is often owed to the issues that they passionately champion on the behalf of the communities they vow to protect. For us, building legislative relationships that elevate oral health disease prevention is in harmony with the hallmark of the dental profession.

Step 1 Building Legislative Relationships to Elevate Oral Health

Arrange to meet with the state senator or delegate in your district. Some dentists may already have a relationship with their district legislators, whose re-election campaign they routinely support. If you do not have these types of established relationships, it is okay to start now. No politician will turn down the opportunity to speak with a constituent about a meaningful concern or issue. You may not get a meeting immediately, but please do accept the date(s) that may be offered to your organization.

Any or all of the four avenues listed below are ways to establish relationships central to getting oral health education legislation passed in your state. It is easier and less time-consuming than you may think. More importantly, these relationships could aid you with future legislation.

Schedule a Meeting

- Call to schedule a meeting with your state congressman, congresswomen, senator, or delegate at their local office and identify yourselves as members (president, vice president, treasurer, etc.) of your association or society. While we realize you are busy, it is a good idea to send a thank you note via U.S. mail or email after you are given the meeting date. This is a nice way to confirm your appointment.

Thanking the secretary or legislative aid for scheduling the appointment with your organization is hugely meaningful. It can sometimes be challenging for them to get you on their schedules. Your recognition of their efforts will garner tremendous goodwill. They often become advocates, as the need for oral health education legislation is abundantly clear to people from all walks of life.

Extend an Invitation

- Invite your state congressmen, congresswomen, senators and state delegates to your association or society's holiday soiree or to your association or society's birthday party, etc. If possible, have a special table with their name cards boldly visible and ask them if they would be willing to address your gathering—they love these types of opportunities. However, before you do so, be certain to tell them that you would like them to support oral health education legislation in your state. Do not give them the microphone before doing so. It is okay to hand them a note saying, *"Please don't forget to mention that you are looking into legislation to help get oral health education laws passed in our great state."*

Attend a Campaign Event

- There are often many opportunities to attend campaign events prior to the start of the state legislative session. It is important that members attend their state

Congressmen, congresswomen, senators, and delegates' annual re-election fundraisers and contribute to the re-election campaigns of these officials. This is the true meaning of symbiosis. They need you, and you need them. Legislators look forward to your votes and financial support. They welcome your creativity and the ideas you offer that help to better the lives of communities and families. You need them in order to get oral health education legislation passed in your state.

These events can sometimes be pricy. Not too worry. If you or your members cannot attend, send a check with a note thanking them for accepting your contribution to their fundraiser or re-election campaign. Include a statement thanking them for their dedication to the oral health well-being of the citizens of your state.

Finally, it is important to remember that during the legislative session, campaign contributions are prohibited in most, if not, all states.

Participate in Your State's Legislative Event(s)

- If your state has a *Dentists Day on the Hill*, it is important that your members attend. In Maryland, the ADA Component, which is the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA), hosts Dentists Day in Annapolis every year. It is a great opportunity to visit with state congressman, congresswomen, senators, and delegates and/or their representatives. The Maryland Dental Society (MDS) partners with the MSDA and takes full advantage of this opportunity.

It is a good idea to invite members from neighboring states to attend your legislative day meetings and events. This helps expand the outreach and to increase the number of those advocating for the legislation. A number of members of the Dr. Robert T. Freeman Dental Society (RTFDS), the Washington, DC, component chapter of the National Dental Association, practice in Maryland and frequently take advantage of these opportunities. Members register for the event and help to support the cost of this legislative day information tool (i.e., flash drive) that is provided to legislators.

Though it is *Dentists Day in Annapolis*, and the state legislators are expecting our visits, the MSDA members and the MDS wisely schedule specific meeting times. This can make for more productive meetings and comprehensive dialogue concerning the issue(s).

While the relationship between the MSDA and the MDS has been ongoing for years now, the success of this liaison comes from both organizations communicating openly to achieve consensus on many legislative issues. In 2012, The Children's Oral Health Institute and the Maryland Dental Society (MDS) introduced the oral health education legislation, which was supported by the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA). Organized dentistry agreed that it was time to pursue the passage of oral health education law for the sake of all children in our public schools.

There was some concentrated dialogue with the Maryland State Department of Education about the frequency of the required certification and monitoring. The MDS and MSDA agreed to the terms and avoided controversial discourse. The bill went on to receive support from:

- ✓ Maryland's 7th District Congressman Elijah E. Cummings*
- ✓ Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH)
- ✓ Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) *
- ✓ Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (MSBDE)
- ✓ Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) *
- ✓ Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA)
- ✓ National Dental Association (NDA)
- ✓ National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE)
- ✓ The Children's Oral Health Institute (COHI)
- ✓ Advocates for Children and Families (ACF)*
- ✓ The Baltimore Teacher's Union (BTU)
- ✓ Prince George's County Health Department
- ✓ University of Maryland College of Dental Surgery—Dept. of Dental Hygiene
- ✓ Dr. Edward Chappelle, president-elect—NDA
- ✓ Dr. Joseph Berk, attending pediatrician—John Hopkins Hospital*
- ✓ Delegate Nathaniel T. Oaks, 41st District-Baltimore City

Finally, it is always a feather in your cap to present your state congressmen, congresswomen, senators, and state delegates and their staff with an appropriate informational tool or keepsake from your association or society. Most states prohibit the giving of gifts over \$10.

The types of items that are most appreciated, and can usually be accepted, are items that have your logo on it. You can also have an item designed for your legislative day event/special meetings. Include items that are useful and easily identify your organization, which can help keep your concerns at the forefront of legislators. Items such as the following are always a win, win:

- Paperweight with your logo
- USB drive downloaded with your legislative interest
- coffee mug with toothbrush, toothpaste and dental floss
- luggage tag with your contact information
- Bookmark, key ring, ink pen, etc.

We are more than happy to provide a sample(s) of any remaining items from our Dentists Day in Annapolis at your request. Postage should be of minimal expense to your organization.

**Written testimony submitted. Both oral testimonies given and written testimony submitted for all others.*

Building legislative relationships to elevate oral health may include attending interest- related events, including fundraisers and forums. This could mean crafting letters and press releases, meeting with the board of education in your state, scheduling time with senators and delegate, and talking to lobbyists. Some examples are addressed in these links:

Cummings-event.pdf

 907K [View](#) [Download](#)

Medicaid/CHIP Conf.pdf

 47K [View](#) [Download](#)

MDS letter.pdf

 55K [View](#) [Download](#)

OHE PRESS RELEASE.pdf

 108K [View](#) [Download](#)

June27Event Flyer.pdf

 44K [View](#) [Download](#)

MSDE liaison letter.pdf

 203K [View](#) [Download](#)

MCOHI Press Release.pdf

 572K [View](#) [Download](#)

Dentistday_STD.pdf

 74K [View](#) [Download](#)

DentistDay.pdf

 1466K [View](#) [Download](#)

STEP 2 Drafting the Oral Health Education Legislation

If we can put a man on the moon, and we can put a telephone in our pocket, we can draft oral health education legislation that will incorporate oral health education into the public school curriculum. Drafting the oral health education legislation is not a laborious task as so much of the language needed to craft the document already exists.

STEP 2 Drafting the Oral Health Education Legislation

Draft an outline of the wording and or language you would like contained in your state’s oral health education legislation. Some state dental organizations have a legislative committee that will discuss the initial bill wording. The committee chair and or a designated member may refine the language. Organizations that do not have a legislative structure in place could have a member to express interest in advancing oral health education or other issues and could be given support by members to initiate the wording.

While some dental organizations retain a lobbyist or legislative liaison, there are those who do not. If you do have the support of such individuals, corroboration is important. The Maryland State Dental Association retains a lobbyist who works closely with its members and the members of collaborating organizations during the legislative session and throughout the year to help advance their agenda.

For your ease—and to expedite the oral health education efforts of your association or society—please feel free to refer to the attachments. These are the chain of events that occurred due to the efforts of the dentists in the state of Maryland. The attached bill draft is made available for your comfort and ease of use. Remove our organization name and replace it with yours. Duplicate and use our legislation that passed on May 22, 2012, “Oral Health Education—Certification and Monitoring,” to share with your sponsor(s).

Initial Draft

- Present the draft your organization has prepared to the legislator (state senator or delegate) who will be the lead sponsor of the bill. We offered our initial draft at the request of our lead sponsor, Senator Joan Carter Conway of Baltimore City, 43rd District.

Sponsor(s) Draft

- The initial oral health education bill draft presented by the Maryland Dental Society and The Children’s Oral Health Institute was modified by the sponsor’s bill writer. Modifications and additions are often acceptable to organizations if the revised bill accomplishes your goal. Communication with the *bill writer* by email, text messaging, or telephone is important. You can also send a fax.

Amendments

- This process of formally modifying our legislation, only addressed “when” the *Oral Health Education—Certification and Monitoring* report must be presented to the governor. Thus the amendment, while requiring that oral health education be taught in Maryland schools each year (and certified and monitored), need only be presented by the 24 state superintendents to the governor and MSDE every 5 years. Organized dentistry requested the report be provided, “annually” but we conceded on this request to help ensure passage of the legislation.

Final Bill Language and the Fiscal and Policy Note

- The Final Bill—Fiscal and Policy Note. It is important to note that Senator Joan Carter Conway crafted the Oral Health Education—Certification and Monitoring legislation so that it had no fiscal note. In other words, it cost the state nothing—not one penny. She also collaborated with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on the revised writing of the bill. They too graciously took part in helping to write the law. This effort helped influence the favorable support of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH).

The links to our initial draft document, the sponsor draft document and the final bill draft and fiscal/policy note are as follows:

Initial Draft.pdf

 465K [View](#) [Download](#)

Sponsor(s) Draft.pdf

 98K [View](#) [Download](#)

Bill/Fiscal Note.pdf

 65K [View](#) [Download](#)

STEP 3 Preparing the Oral Health Education Testimony

Preparing oral health education testimony comes from the heart, the facts, and the faces of the children who need you to speak on their behalf.

STEP 3 Preparing the Oral Health Education Testimony

Talking Points

- Talking points can be obtained from many dental organizations and other websites. The 2000 Surgeon General’s Report¹ was the source of most of the talking points assembled by Maryland dentists.

Oral/Written Testimony

- All testimonies should be well thought out. Prepare your oral testimony first by writing your thoughts down. The legislators love personal stories, but you must be careful not to speak too long. The average time allowance for oral testimony was approximately 3 minutes. The oral testimony you give should be done in bullet point form. See the linked talking points.

Using a larger font for your prepared bullet points can be helpful because the committee chair may ask that you not “read” your testimony. Having bullet points prepared in a large font size, will allow you to glance at your statements and be reminded of what you want to communicate to the committee instead of reading verbatim.

It is also best to have your oral testimony prepared in letter form. These letters will be submitted along with the written testimony your organization will (may) provide from you and others who are supporting your legislation. In addition to the letters and oral testimony, position papers were also presented as part of the testimony offered on behalf of this legislation.

Position Papers and Press Releases

- In government, a position paper affirms definite opinions and proposes solutions but may not detail specific plans for implementation. The Maryland State Dental Association, the Maryland Dental Society, the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners, and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene provided the attached position papers. They are included at the end of this section.

The press release or press statement is a written or recorded communication directed at members of the news media for the purpose of announcing something ostensibly newsworthy. Typically, they are mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to assignment editors at newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television stations, or television networks. Like most of organized dentistry today, Maryland utilized press releases to disseminate information about the commitment of the state to the oral health education legislation.

¹ *Oral Health In America: A Report of the Surgeon General* Rockville MD: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institute of Health, 2000.

PowerPoint Presentation Testimony

- A picture is worth a thousand words. The Children's Oral Health Institute presented a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of Maryland's 2012 Oral Health Education legislation, which was used to help the committees visualize what we see clinically. They get a glimpse into our dental practices, into the dental clinics of our Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), at our Missions of Mercy (MOM) outreach events, at community health fairs and school screenings. The presentation included approximately 12 educational slides with factual text and meaningful images. You can choose to include other media, such as audio clips and movie shorts. Remember to keep it to a minimum.

Other Testimony Support Material

- Related television and YouTube clips, newspaper and internet articles, and press releases are also important support materials to aide legislative testimony.

TALKING POINTS

Talking Points.pdf

 277K [View](#) [Download](#)

Fact Sheet.pdf

 62K [View](#) [Download](#)

ORAL/WRITTEN TESTIMONY

SAMPLE TESTIMONY.pdf

 67K [View](#) [Download](#)

Cummings Testimony.pdf

796K [View](#) [Download](#)

Chappelle Testimony.pdf

111K [View](#) [Download](#)

Fletcher Testimony.pdf

322K [View](#) [Download](#)

Hughes Testimony.pdf

176K [View](#) [Download](#)

Irons Testimony.pdf

196K [View](#) [Download](#)

BTU Testimony.pdf

335K [View](#) [Download](#)

ADHA-MD Testimony.pdf

209K [View](#) [Download](#)

ACY Testimony.pdf

480K [View](#) [Download](#)

MDAC Testimony.pdf

123K [View](#) [Download](#)

POSITION PAPERS/PRESS RELEASES

DHMH/Goodman.pdf

194K [View](#) [Download](#)

MSBDE.pdf

111K [View](#) [Download](#)

MDS/MSDA.pdf

458K [View](#) [Download](#)

COHI .pdf

414K [View](#) [Download](#)

OTHER TESTIMONY SUPPORT MATERIALS



Deaths.pdf

10K [View](#) [Download](#)



Washington Post.htm

172K [View](#) [Download](#)



NJ.com (2).htm

135K [View](#) [Download](#)



ABC News.htm

209K [View](#) [Download](#)



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8559K [View](#) [Download](#)

STEP 4 Preparing for Opposition and Obstacles to the Oral Health Education Legislation

In preparing for the opposition, organized dentistry in Maryland embraced families and professionals who are committed to oral health education becoming a part of the public school curriculum. Parents, teachers, and other stakeholders were engaged to not only provide testimony but also to attend legislative events and meetings for the sake of the law being proposed.

The only opposition the Oral Health Education—Certification and Monitoring legislation received was from the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE). They argued that teachers were already overwhelmed by the requirements of “No Child Left Behind” and “Race to the Top.” They went on to say that requiring teachers to include oral health as part of the curriculum would place an additional burden on them. They further stated in their written testimony to the legislative committees that oral health education was already being taught. A copy of the written testimony they submitted is can be downloaded from the attached MABE link located at the bottom of this page.

A primary obstacle faced by dentists is affording time away from the practice during the legislative session. There may not be enough advance notice to schedule time away to testify on behalf of your bill or to attend the hearings.

One solution has been suggested to overcome this obstacle. Prior to the legislative session, dentists will leave a day or two open for unscheduled patients in anticipation of being asked to testify or attend hearings on short notice. This way there is the flexibility to move patients to the unscheduled day(s). Another consideration would be to provide treatment on a weekend if you do not routinely already do so.

There is strength in numbers and while every dentist who attends the House and Senate hearings many not testify, it is important that organized dentistry demonstrate its commitment to the legislation being proposed to the Senate and House committees.

Another challenge dentists often confront is having ample time to prepare what they need to communicate during their testimony. Sometimes we may struggle to stay on topic. Tips and a template have already been provided in Step 3.

Remember, bullets points in large, bold print are very helpful during the actual oral testimony. You can easily glance at what you want to say. Remember too that your congressman, senators and delegates are human. They are usually not so far removed from the passionate oral health story you tell and or the compelling facts you deliver to this audience of global state leaders. Keeping this in mind may help to eliminate the tendency to sometimes get off track.

The resilient collaborations cultivated by Maryland are in of itself a testament to overcoming oral health education legislation opposition and obstacles. These relationships affirm the value of the working rapport between organized dentistry, state departments of education and others who journey on the pathway to promote oral health education in public schools.

 **MABE.pdf**
489K [View](#) [Download](#)

STEP 5 Expanding the Oral Health Education Preference

It has been our ability to maintain the lines of communication that continues to help us advance the expansion of the oral health education preference in public schools. It is important to maintain the relationships that have been nurtured to institute oral health education in Maryland and throughout the nation.

STEP 5 Expanding the Oral Health Education Preference

Listed below are some of the efforts that have afforded organized dentistry in Maryland opportunities to continue expanding the preference for oral health education in the classroom.

Convene Your Members

- Convene your members to attend the signing of your Oral Health Education Legislation into law by your state governor! This event offers you an opportunity to bring greetings from your organization and to thank your governor for his/her commitment to the education and oral health well-being of children and families in your great state.

The governors may select certain bills to hold a reception for in honor of the new law. This is done in addition to the bill signing event. The reception is usually held just prior to the official bill signing. The reception may afford you and your organization an opportunity to meet the governor and other key administration officials. Media is sometime invited so be prepared to engage them.

Use the Media

- The media may be present, and they may wish to ask you about the need for or the importance the oral health legislation. You will be able to refer to the talking points provided to you and your organization via Maryland's *Pathway to Help Get Oral Health Education Legislation Passed in Your State*.

You may also wish to give the media a copy of your written testimony. This can help to keep you from being misquoted. The media is human and is often operating on fast forward. Thus, it is a good idea to have 3 or 4 copies of your testimony and organization talking points available to give reporters, writers, etc.

Plan an Association/Society Meeting (s)

- Be certain to invite the legislator(s) responsible for getting your bill signed into law to a monthly association/society meeting before the end of the year. You may wish to plan a special event. Present the legislators who sponsored your oral health bill with an award or plaque (see attached sample/wording). This is so important, as local politicians often do thankless work and rarely receive public displays of gratitude or recognition. The other reason this is important is that you may need their support again on other legislation.

Partner With Your State Department of Education

- It is necessary to continue developing the relationship between organized dentistry and the department of education in your state after your legislation is signed into law. The Maryland State Department of Education and dental professionals are working together to introduce oral health education into the public school curriculum.

Work With Your Dental Hygiene Associations

- Working with your dental hygiene associations to educate public schools will help to build curriculum preference. The Maryland Dental Hygienists' Association continues to be a major ally in the efforts to expand oral health education. It is most likely these women and men who will lead this instruction in our public schools.

MDS.pdf

 99K [View](#) [Download](#)

NGA.ppt

 9778K [View](#) [Download](#)

COHI.pdf

 264K [View](#) [Download](#)

OHE.pdf

 108K [View](#) [Download](#)

NDA.pdf

 260K [View](#) [Download](#)

MDS (1).pdf

 68K [View](#) [Download](#)

MSDE OHE .ppt

 8559K [View](#) [Download](#)

Reception Invitation.pdf

 386K [View](#) [Download](#)

hilldayflyer.pdf

 261K [View](#) [Download](#)

In Closing

Significant progress has been made since the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released the Surgeon General's Report in 2000, which brought attention to the alarming impact that poor dental health has on school performance. The tragic 2007 deaths of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver in Maryland and 6-year-old Alexander Collander in Mississippi will forever reinforce the need to continue building on efforts to end the oral health crisis. Advocating for disease education and prevention programs for children and their families may prove to contribute toward avoiding tragedy secondary to poor oral health.

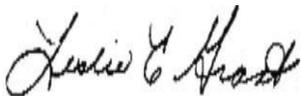
Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley signed legislation on May 22, 2012, compelling the Maryland State Department of Education to support and facilitate oral health education in classrooms. Under the law, public schools provide a report to the governor each year that confirms oral health education is being taught.

The Oral Health Education—Certification and Monitoring legislation obligates the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to support and facilitate oral health education. Oral disease prevention and dental health must be promoted in every jurisdiction. The Maryland State Board of Education's job is to encourage the local boards of education to incorporate age-appropriate lessons on oral disease prevention and dental health promotion into the local board's health education curriculum.

A process is being developed to monitor the implementation. The MSDE will submit an annual summary to the state superintendent of schools certifying that oral health education was taught. The law builds on the efforts to raise academic performances and to help eliminate oral health disparities and access to care challenges. It is another dedicated and unified movement to help Maryland reach these goals.

Thank you for considering the *Pathway to Help Get Oral Health Education Legislation Passed in Your State* outline assembled by Maryland's leaders in dentistry. We hope you will use this template and the associated position paper developed by the National Governors Association to move oral health education efforts forward in your state.

Sincerely,



Leslie E. Grant, DDS, MSPA
Director of Advocacy & Outreach
The Children's Oral Health Institute



E. Dustin Mersinger, DDS
President
Maryland State Dental Association

Maryland Dental Directory

Feel free to contact us. We will offer our experience and knowledge to assist you in achieving Oral Health Education legislation for public schools in your state!

Maryland Academy of General Dentistry: www.maryland-agd.org

Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry: www.mdapd.org

Maryland Dental Action Coalition: www.mdac.us

Maryland Dental Society: www.themds.org

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Office of Oral Health:
<http://phpa.dhmh.maryland>

Maryland State Department of Education: marylandpublicschools.org

Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners: www.dhmh.state.md.us/dental

Maryland State Dental Association: www.msda.com

The Children's Oral Health Institute: www.mycohi.org

University of Maryland Baltimore College of Dental Surgery:
www.dental.umaryland.edu



Thank you