

June 2, 2022

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia  
The Honorable John Littel, Secretary of Health and Human Resources  
Patrick Henry Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
1111 East Broad St.  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin and Secretary Littel,

We want to start by thanking Secretary Littel for your remarks this morning at the Virginia Chamber of Commerce Healthcare Summit. The priorities your administration is placing on mental health and healthcare workforce shortages are encouraging to hear for oral health providers and, as an association representing dentists in Virginia, we hope to work with the administration to ensure that the challenges around the pipeline for dental assistants and dental hygienists are included in the comprehensive workforce plan under development.

Today, we are writing in support of the critical funding for a long-overdue dental Medicaid reimbursement increase included in the General Assembly's budget.

Since 2005, prices for dental services have increased more than 60% while the reimbursement rate for the Virginia's Smiles for Children Dental Medicaid benefit program has remained flat.

As the reimbursements have eroded, fewer dental providers have been able to make that a sustainable practice model, resulting in more barriers to access essential dental care. The *Virginian Pilot* reported last month that we have about 150 fewer dental providers participating in the program than five years ago, while the more than 750,000 adults who were added last year are sometimes forgoing their benefit to be seen faster.

Our dental Medicaid reimbursement rates fall double-digits behind Maryland, Washington DC, Delaware and West Virginia.

Without action, we'll see Virginia dentists continue to struggle to treat the surge in adult Medicaid patients and can expect more patients with acute oral health pain in hospitals and other settings that are ill-equipped to address the root cause of their issue. This long-overdue funding is critical to addressing the oral health access gap in the Commonwealth and improving the overall health of Virginians and we ask you to preserve it in the budget.

Sincerely,



Ryan Dunn  
CEO



Scott Berman, DDS  
President