MICHIGAN COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINICS, INC.

One Water Street, Suite 200
Boyne City, MI 49712

Phone 231.547.7638
FAX 231.582.2967
Toll-Free 877.313.MCDC
Website www.midental.org

Testimony to the
House Committee –Michigan Competitiveness

Provided by
Kimberly Singh M.A. C.H.E.S.
Director of Community and Governmental Affairs
Michigan Community Dental Clinics Inc.
May 16, 2013

Chairman Shirkey, Members of the Committee, Citizens and Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. My name is Kim Singh and I am the Director of Community and Governmental Affairs for Michigan Community Dental Clinics Inc. (MCDC). MCDC is a private not-for-profit 501c3 dental services corporation established in 2006 focused on serving Medicaid and low-income uninsured persons throughout the State of Michigan.

MCDC currently operates 22 public dental clinics on behalf of local health departments. In calendar year 2012, our clinics served a total of 72,000 Medicaid and low income patients, providing over 194,000 office visits. Our innovative model based on a public-private partnership is able to deliver dental care for a population who otherwise has very limited or non-existent access to care.

Some facts –

- According to the 2000 *Oral Health in America a Report of the Surgeon General* – oral health is essential to overall health and well-being.
- Infections of the mouth such as periodontal (gum) disease can increase the risk for heart disease, can put pregnant woman at greater risk for a preterm delivery and can complicate the control of blood sugar for people with diabetes.
- Changes in the mouth are often the first signs of problems elsewhere such as immune disorders, cancer and stroke.
- Current research also suggests an association between Alzheimer's disease and periodontal disease.
- Each year an increasing number of individuals seek dental care in hospital emergency rooms.
- There were approximately 1,000 annual preventable dental related hospitalizations in Michigan from 2009-2010, with over 9 million in charges.

Michigan Community Dental Clinics commends the Legislature for moving forward with a bill to expand Medicaid eligibility. As you heard from Rick Murdock on Tuesday – Michigan's privately operated Managed Care Medicaid program is improving health status for enrollees and is saving hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

As you continue to deliberate on HB 4717 I would like to offer the following for your consideration to truly achieve a healthier Michigan population over the long term –

- **Assure that the Medicaid expansion incorporates the existing coverage that includes an adult dental benefit. Access to oral health services is essential to overall health – we cannot fix dental related problems in emergency departments.**

- **Eliminate the 48 month cap – Medicaid is an essential safety-net program providing health care benefits to 20% of the population in Michigan. People should not be arbitrarily disenrolled- 80% of current Medicaid enrollees are working and paying taxes.**

- **The current Medicaid system is built upon a State and Federal partnership to share in the costs. Do not include a provision to end the program if not paid for 100% by the Federal government. Pre-pay future year costs, with expected savings in years one through three.**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input – for the 350,000-400,000 residents that will be positively impacted by the expansion – I encourage you to expand Medicaid *without requirements that will create barriers to accessing care.*

Kimberly Singh, M.A. C.H.E.S.
ksingh@midental.org
616-225-6144