



Dear President-elect Biden and Presidential Transition Co-chairs:

The Medicare Oral Health Coalition, representing consumers, older adults, people with disabilities, patients, providers, industry, and social services, appreciate President-elect Biden's campaign platform and the Biden-Sanders Unity Taskforce recommendations that prioritized expanding access to oral health coverage and dental care. We believe that it is critical that any health coverage and access conversation include consideration for oral health coverage, and we are particularly enthusiastic about your strong commitment to Medicare oral health coverage.

For too many Americans oral health coverage and care remain out of reach. That problem has only gotten worse as the COVID-19 pandemic assails our communities' health, squeezes family budgets, and exacerbates inequities. Improving oral health coverage, particularly adding oral health coverage to Medicare, is a critical piece of pandemic response, economic recovery, and promoting health equity. We look forward to working with the incoming Biden administration to make improved oral health coverage a reality for families across the country.

Specifically, the Coalition urges the President-elect to:

1. **Advance federal policies that add comprehensive oral health coverage to Medicare program**, including working with Congress to incorporate an oral health benefit into Medicare Part B.
2. **Take immediate administrative action to extend Medicare coverage of oral health care that is required in connection with urgent medical treatment**, as is allowed under existing statutory authority.

Oral health care is key to overall health and wellness, employment opportunities, economic stability, and social connectedness. When we cannot access the care we all need, oral health problems can prevent us from eating, working, securing employment, and staying healthy.

In fact, oral health is directly related to COVID-19 outcomesⁱ, and people with COVID-19 who have poor oral health tend to get sicker and are more likely to die. The communities that would benefit the most from improved oral health care are the very communities who have been most likely to get sick or lose their jobs during the pandemic. Medicare oral health coverage would help address the disproportionate challenges that people of color, rural communities, veterans, older adults, people with disabilities, and people in nursing facilities and other congregate settings face to improving overall health.

Fortunately, Medicare oral health coverage is a rare bipartisan issue, and has strong public support. Polls have repeatedly shown that adding oral health coverage to Medicare is overwhelming popular across the country, including with people of both political parties, all ages, races, and geographiesⁱⁱ.

The Medicare Oral Health Coalition looks forward to working with the transition team and future Biden administration to advance policies that address Medicare oral health coverage.

Sincerely, The Medicare Oral Health Coalition

ⁱ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41415-020-1747-8>

ⁱⁱ <https://familiesusa.org/resources/families-usa-yougov-national-poll/>

The Medicare Oral Health Coalition is dedicated to ensuring that all Medicare enrollees have affordable, comprehensive oral health coverage as part of their overall health coverage. The coalition's formal members currently include Families USA, AARP, National Rural Health Association, National Association of Community Health Centers, American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, Justice in Aging, Center for Medicare Advocacy, The Arc of the United States, American Dental Hygienists' Association, National Council on Aging, Meals on Wheels, the DentaQuest Partnership, Community Catalyst, the Gerontological Society of America, and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The views expressed by the Coalition do not necessarily represent those of individual members.