



As Congress and the White House continue to negotiate the details of the Build Back Better plan, on behalf of the Medicare Oral Health Coalition – which includes leading organizations representing oral health, health care consumers, older adults, people with disabilities, patients, providers, industry, social service, and others – we believe that now is a critical time for adding dental coverage to Medicare, an important policy that also has overwhelming public support. **Policymakers have the opportunity to advance historic legislation that would lower health care costs for millions of families in America, and comprehensive Medicare oral health coverage is a key piece of that puzzle.**

For far too long, health in America has depended on one's wealth— without insurance, dental care is so expensive that it is the number one medical service that people in America skip due to the cost. Strengthening Medicare by including comprehensive dental coverage in Part B would represent a giant step toward improving health, health equity, and financial security for the nearly 60 million older adults and people with disabilities who rely on the program for health insurance.

Thus it is no surprise that dozens of polls have shown strong, bipartisan support for this issue, with results repeatedly showing roughly 9 in 10 voters support Medicare dental coverage including 7 in 10 Republicans. Over the past several months, these polls have shown particularly striking and consistent data:

- [Public Policy Polling](#) surveyed voters in Arizona, West Virginia, New Jersey, and Delaware in early October and found that 79% of Arizona voters, 81% of West Virginia voters, 84% of New Jersey voters, and 86% of Delaware voters support policies to lower drug costs **after hearing that savings from lower drug prices would be used to provide health care benefits for hearing, dental, and vision to seniors on Medicare**, and lower insurance premiums for millions more. Supporters include 76-85% of Republicans and 71-82% of independents.
- [CBS News/YouGov](#) from early October found that **84% support federal funding for Medicare coverage for dental, eye and hearing, including 70% of self-identified conservatives.**
- [West Health/NORC AmeriSpeak](#) surveyed possible voters in September and found that **91% thought that dental coverage should be added to Medicare.**
- [Hart Research Associates](#) surveyed voters in late summer and found that **95% support making dental, vision and hearing care more affordable for seniors by covering them under Medicare.**
- [YouGov](#) surveyed likely 2022 voters in July and found that **78% support adding oral health coverage to Medicare (82% support in 8 of the 2022 battleground states), including 77% of self-identified moderates and 65% of conservatives.** In addition, 93% believe dental care is a necessary part of overall health care; 65% believe any Medicare savings should be used to introduce oral health benefits; 55% hold their congressional representatives responsible for a lack of oral health coverage; and 52% of voters age 65+ avoid necessary dental visits because of cost.
- [Morning Consult/Politico](#) surveyed registered voters in June and found that **84% support adding dental, vision and hearing coverage to Medicare, including 79% of Republicans. Support for this expansion was the most popular among the 6 health care proposals surveyed.**
- [Data for Progress](#) surveyed likely voters in June and found **83% support expanding Medicare to provide dental, vision and hearing benefits, including 76% of Republicans.**

Medicare dental coverage is popular because it would have an enormous impact for millions of families. Older adults and people with disabilities in America would not only be able to afford important dental care, but they would also be healthier, happier, have lower health costs, be better able to get and keep jobs, face less social isolation, and be more financially secure. It is particularly important for people with low incomes and in advancing health equity. **Incorporating comprehensive dental benefits into Part B, unlike watered-down alternatives, is the best way to meet older adults' needs and meet voters' expectations. Now is the moment for Congress to act.**

*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 CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, Community Catalyst, the Gerontological Society of America, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Dialysis Patient Citizens, National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services, National Coalition of Dentists for Health Equity, and the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) Inc.** The views expressed by the Coalition do not necessarily represent those of individual members.*

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