

Community Statement on Medicare Coverage for Medically Necessary Oral and Dental Health Therapies

The undersigned organizations are proud to join in support of Medicare coverage for medically necessary oral/dental health therapies.

It is well established that chronic diseases disproportionately impact Medicare beneficiaries and impose a substantial cost on the federal government. It is also well established that untreated oral microbial infections are closely linked to a wide range of costly chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, dementia, and stroke. In addition, oral diseases have been documented by researchers and medical specialty societies as precluding, delaying, and even jeopardizing medical treatments such as organ and stem cell transplantation, heart valve repair or replacement, cancer chemotherapies, placement of orthopedic prostheses, and management of autoimmune diseases.

Despite these factors, most Medicare beneficiaries do not currently receive oral/dental care even when medically necessary for the treatment of Medicare-covered diseases. In fact, Medicare coverage extends to the treatment of all microbial infections except for those relating to the teeth and periodontium. There is simply no medical justification for this exclusion, especially in light of the broad agreement among health care providers that such care is integral to the medical management of numerous diseases and medical conditions. Moreover, the lack of medically necessary oral/dental care heightens the risk of costly medical complications, increasing the financial burden on Medicare, beneficiaries, and taxpayers.

A number of major insurance carriers provide medically necessary oral and dental coverage to targeted enrollees with conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, head/neck cancers, and transplants. According to some reports, such coverage has realized important benefits, including markedly lower hospitalization and emergency department admission rates as well as substantial cost reductions. On a further note, veterans getting care through the Veterans Health Administration receive medically adjunctive oral/dental treatment in many instances when a dental diagnosis affects their medical prognosis. These are all important steps forward, and medically necessary oral/dental healthcare should be provided in traditional Medicare as well.

The Medicare program and all its beneficiaries should not be without the vital clinical and fiscal benefits of coverage for medically necessary oral/dental health therapies. Given the significant potential to improve health outcomes and reduce program costs, we urge Congress and the Administration to explore options for extending such evidence-based coverage for all Medicare beneficiaries.

AARP
 ABLE NH (Advocates Building Lasting Equality in NH)
 ACA Consumer Advocacy
 Acuity Specialists
 Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma Research Foundation
 AIDS Foundation of Chicago
 Alliance for Retired Americans
 Allies for Independence
 ALS Association
 American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry
 American Academy of Nursing
 American Academy of Periodontology
 American Association for Community Dental Programs
 American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research
 American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
 American Association of Colleges of Nursing
 American Association of Diabetes Educators
 American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons
 American Association of Kidney Patients
 American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
 American Association of Nurse Practitioners
 American Association of Public Health Dentistry
 American Association on Health and Disability
 American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
 American College of Cardiology
 American College of Emergency Physicians
 American College of Gastroenterology
 American College of Physicians
 American College of Rheumatology
 American Dental Assistants Association
 American Dental Education Association
 American Dental Hygienists' Association
 American Diabetes Association
 American Geriatrics Society
 American Head and Neck Society
 American Heart Association
 American Institute of Dental Public Health
 American Kidney Fund
 American Liver Foundation
 American Medical Association
 American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP)
 American Nephrology Nurses' Association
 American Network of Oral Health Coalitions
 American Nurses Association
 American Parkinson Disease Association
 American Psychiatric Association
 American Psychiatric Nurses Association
 American Public Health Association
 American Society for Radiation Oncology
 American Society of Clinical Oncology
 American Society of Nephrology
 American Society of Transplant Surgeons
 American Society of Transplantation
 American Thoracic Society
 Arcora Foundation
 Arizona Oral Health Coalition
 Arthritis Foundation
 Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
 Association of Community Cancer Centers
 Association of Oncology Social Work
 Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors
 Autistic Self Advocacy Network
 Be a Hero
 Brain Injury Association of America
 California Dental Association
 California Medical Association
 CareQuest Institute for Oral Health
 Carlson Foley Enterprises
 Catholic Health Association of the United States
 Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE)
 Center for Elder Law & Justice
 Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation
 Center for Medicare Advocacy
 Center for Popular Democracy
 Champaign County Health Care Consumers
 Children's Dental Health Project
 Coalition for Oral Health for the Aging
 Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
 Colgate Palmolive Company
 Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
 Community Catalyst
 Community Dental Health NPO
 Connecticut Oral Health Initiative
 Cornerstone Dental Specialties
 Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America
 Culpeper Wellness Foundation
 Davis Phinney Foundation for Parkinson's
 Delaware Dental Hygienists' Association
 Dental Lifeline Network
 Dental Trade Alliance
 Dentsply Sirona
 Dialysis Patient Citizens

Dientes Community Dental Care
 Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
 Eating Disorders Coalition
 Elderly Housing Development & Operations Corporation
 Epilepsy Foundation
 EXCELth, Inc.
 Families USA
 504HealthNet
 Florida Health Justice Project
 Georgia AIDS Coalition
 Georgians for a Healthy Future
 Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
 GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare
 GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
 Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing
 Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition
 Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!
 Head and Neck Cancer Alliance
 Health Care For All (MA)
 Health Care Is a Human Right WA
 Health Care Voices
 Healthy Living and Learning Center
 Heartland Alliance
 Henry Schein Cares Foundation
 HIV Medicine Association
 Hispanic Dental Association
 International Pemphigus and Pemphigoid Foundation
 Island Liaison, Inc.
 John A. Hartford Foundation
 Jon C Burr Foundation
 Justice in Aging
 Kentucky Oral Health Coalition
 Klamath Basin Oral Health Coalition
 Lakeshore Foundation
 Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
 Louisiana Primary Care Association
 Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
 Lupus Foundation of America
 Maryland Dental Action Coalition
 Massachusetts ME/CFS and FM Assoc
 Medicaid|Medicare|CHIP Services Dental Association
 Medicare Rights Center
 Mended Hearts
 Mental Health America
 Metro New York Health Care for All
 Michigan Primary Care Association
 Minnesota Dental Therapy Association
 myNEXUS
 National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
 National Alliance on Mental Illness
 National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
 National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
 National Association of Community Health Centers
 National Association of Dental Plans
 National Association of Nutrition and Aging
 Services Programs
 National Association of Social Workers
 National Association of States United for Aging
 and Disabilities
 National Coalition of Dentists for Health Equity
 National Comprehensive Cancer Network
 National Committee to Preserve Social Security
 and Medicare
 National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
 National Consumers League
 National Council for Behavioral Health
 National Council on Aging
 National Dental Association
 National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention
 National Hispanic Medical Association
 National Health Law Program
 National Interprofessional Initiative on Oral Health
 National Kidney Foundation
 National League for Nursing
 National Medical Association
 National Multiple Sclerosis Society
 National Network for Oral Health Access
 National Osteoporosis Foundation
 National Rural Health Association
 National Stroke Association
 North American Transplant Coordinators Organization
 Northwest Harvest
 Nurses for America
 Nursing Interventions for Health System Elders
 NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing
 Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans Educational Fund
 Oklahoma Policy Institute
 Oncology Nursing Society
 Oral Cancer Foundation
 Oral Health Kansas
 Oral Health Nursing Education and Practice Program
 Oral Health Ohio
 Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN)
 Our Mother's Voice
 PA Coalition for Oral Health

Pacific Dental Services Foundation
Parkinson's Foundation
Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative
Pennsylvania Health Access Network
PEW Dental Campaign
Piedmont Regional Dental Clinic
PRC
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Pride At Work - WA North, Mt. Kulshan Chapter
Procter & Gamble
ProHEALTH Dental
Project Accessible Oral Health
Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA)
Renal Healthcare Association
Renal Physicians Association
Research!America
Santa Fe Group
School-Based Health Alliance
Scleroderma Foundation
Senior Charity Care Foundation
Senior Mobile Dental
Sepsis Alliance
Sjögren's Foundation
Smiles To Go, LLC
Social Security Works
Society for Transplant Social Workers
Special Care Dental Association
Statewide Poverty Action Network
Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer
Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc
Texas Parent to Parent
The AIDS Institute
The Arc of the United States
The Bingham Program
The CornerStone Community Development Center
The Gerontological Society of America
The Michael J. Fox Foundation
The National Forum of ESRD Networks
The Society for Thoracic Surgeons
The TMJ Association
Third Way
Tri-Area Community Health
Trust for America's Health
United Health Organization
United Network for Organ Sharing
UUFHCT
Virginia Community Healthcare Association

Virginia Health Catalyst
Virginia Organizing
Virginia Rural Health Association
Washington Healthcare Access Alliance
Wayne County Oral Health Organization
Wesley Living Woodland Homes
West Central Initiative
Western Center on Law and Poverty
Winters Elder Day Council
WomenHeart, The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease