

The Honorable Mehmet Oz, M.D.
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Dr. Oz,

The undersigned organizations, representing a broad cross section of stakeholders including national and state advocates for patients, families, older adults, and people with disabilities, strongly support Medicare “medically necessary” oral health coverage and encourage the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to do all it can to ensure patients and providers are aware of these important benefits.

As you know, while Medicare does not generally pay for oral health care, Medicare Parts A and B can cover certain dental services that are “inextricably linked to, and substantially related and integral to the clinical success of, certain Medicare-covered services,” including treatment related to organ transplant, cardiac valve replacement, chemotherapy, and end-stage renal disease (ESRD).ⁱ This coverage, commonly referred to as “medically necessary” oral health care, can be lifesaving, and is central to the administration’s stated mission to make health care more affordable.

Medicare’s lack of comprehensive dental coverage leaves oral health care unaffordable for millions of Americans, and it exacerbates underlying and related health conditions.ⁱⁱ Almost half of Traditional Medicare’s beneficiary population reports having no dental coverage and 22% report skipping dental care because of the cost.ⁱⁱⁱ This lack of care impacts overall health, as poor dental health can impact an individual’s risk for cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes.^{iv}

In the absence of Congressional action to authorize a comprehensive Medicare benefit, CMS has taken critical steps to offer hope to beneficiaries who require vital medical treatment that could be complicated, compromised, delayed, and even denied because of unresolved dental disease.^v We applaud those efforts. Going forward, we hope the Trump administration continues to build on these accomplishments by further promoting appropriate use of these benefits, by ensuring that dental and medical providers clearly understand which services are covered and by providing beneficiaries with accessible, plain language information to understand their eligibility and how to obtain needed care.

Not only is improved access to oral health coverage medically important, it is *extremely* popular among voters from across the political spectrum. Poll after poll has shown overwhelming support for a Medicare dental benefit – with the most recent showing 9 out

of 10 voters calling for better oral health care access in Medicare, including 85% of people who voted for President Trump.^{vi}

We are grateful to the administration officials and other stakeholders committed to improving oral health through the Medicare program. We look forward to continuing to work with you to build upon this critical progress to ensure that millions of older adults and people with disabilities in our nation can afford the care they need to get and stay healthy.

Sincerely,

Families USA

AARP

Access Ready Inc.

Alaska Dental Action Coalition

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

American Association of Public Health Dentistry

American Geriatrics Society

American Institute on Disparities in Public Health

American Network of Oral Health Coalitions

Asian Resources, Inc.

Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network

California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

Center for Medicare Advocacy

Coalition Medically Necessary Oral Health Coverage

Colorado Consumer Health Initiative

CommunicationFIRST

Community Catalyst

Educated Mentors with Meaningful Messages

Floridians for Dental Access

Gerontological Society of America

Healthy House Within A MATCH Coalition
Illinois Oral Health Coalition
Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute
Justice in Aging
Maine Primary Care Association
Maryland Dental Action Coalition
Medicare Rights Center
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Association of Social Workers
NICOS Chinese Health Coalition
NJOHC
Oral Health Connections
Oral Health Kansas, Inc.
Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Pennsylvania Coalition for Oral Health
Rhode Island Oral Health Coalition
South Asian Network
USAging
Virginia Health Catalyst
West Virginia Oral Health Coalition, Inc
Wisconsin Oral Health Coalition

ⁱ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services “Medicare Dental Coverage”

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/coverage/dental>

ⁱⁱ Christ, A., G. Burke and J. Goldberg. Adding a Dental Benefit to Medicare: Addressing Racial Disparities. Justice in Aging. October 2019. <https://www.justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Addressing-Oral-HealthEquity-by-Adding-a-Dental-Benefit-to-Medicare.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Janet Sutton and Julie Lee, “Many Medicare Beneficiaries with Dental Insurance Face Financial Barriers to Care” The Commonwealth Fund, April 2, 2025 <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/blog/2025/many-medicare-beneficiaries-dental-insurance-face-financial-barriers-care>; The Commonwealth Fund, “Health Care Affordability for Older Adults: How the U.S. Compares to Other Countries,” Dec 4, 2024 <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2024/dec/health-care-affordability-older-adults-how-us-compares-other-countries>

^{iv} CareQuest Institute, “Oral Health and Aging: Improving Access to Care for Older Adults” May 30, 2024 <https://www.carequest.org/about/blog-post/oral-health-and-aging-improving-access-care-older-adults>; Dr. Martin Abelar, “More Evidence That Poor Oral Health May Cause Diabetes” June 24, 2020

<https://www.keepsmilingsandiego.com/blog/more-evidence-that-poor-oral-health-may-cause-diabetes/>

^v CY 2024 Payment Policies Under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Changes to Part B Payment and Coverage Policies <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/11/16/2023-24184/medicare-and-medicaid-programs-cy-2024-payment-policies-under-the-physician-fee-schedule-and-other>; CY 2025 Payment Policies Under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Changes to Part B Payment and Coverage Policies <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/12/09/2024-25382/medicare-and-medicaid-programs-cy-2025-payment-policies-under-the-physician-fee-schedule-and-other>

^{vi} CareQuest Institute, “Dental Coverage National Voter Polling Results,” <https://carequest.org/dental-coverage-national-voter-polling-results/>