

## **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  
Access Dental Care  
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 Oral Medicine  
American Academy of Oral Systemic Health  
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  
Endocrine Society  
Epilepsy Foundation  
EXCELth, Inc.  
Families USA  
504HealthNet  
Florida Health Justice Project  
Georgia AIDS Coalition  
Georgians for a Healthy Future  
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association  
Gerontological Society of America  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality  
GoMo Health  
Haleon  
Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing  
Hawaii Oral Health Coalition  
Hawaii 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 Hispanic Nurses  
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  
PAN Foundation  
Parkinson's Foundation  
Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative  
Pennsylvania Health Access Network  
PEW Dental Campaign  
Piedmont Regional Dental Clinic  
PKD Foundation  
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 Dentistry 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 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