

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 12, 2023

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

We write to commend the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for taking action to clarify coverage of medically necessary dental treatment under Medicare, consistent with the authority provided by Section 1862(a)(12) of the Social Security Act. As you know, overall health is inextricably linked to oral health. And yet, dental care has long been inaccessible to millions of Medicare beneficiaries, including low-income Medicare beneficiaries and in communities of color, leading to an alarming situation in which two-thirds of Americans over age 65 have periodontal disease and one-fifth have lost all of their teeth. Untreated oral conditions have also increased Medicare beneficiaries' risk of suffering chronic conditions such as diabetes, autoimmune disease, kidney disease, heart disease, and numerous forms of cancer, resulting in an increase in overall Medicare program costs.

Fortunately, the calendar year 2023 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule took an important step forward by clarifying medical coverage for certain medically necessary dental treatment services and establishing an annual process for stakeholders to propose additional clinical scenarios for coverage. Beginning this year, the Medicare program is providing medical coverage for dental treatment that is necessary to the successful performance of organ transplant surgery, cardiac valve replacement, valvuloplasty procedures, and head and neck cancers. In addition, this year marks the first time stakeholders may offer for CMS' consideration clinical evidence demonstrating other circumstances in which dental treatment may be inextricably linked and substantially related and integral to the clinical success of additional medical services covered by the Medicare program.

We are pleased that stakeholders in the medical, dental, and patient communities have utilized CMS' nominations process to propose medical coverage for additional medically necessary services. Specifically, we understand nominations have been submitted for the following:

- Medical coverage of medically necessary dental treatment for beneficiaries diagnosed with diabetes mellitus, based on clinical evidence that non-surgical periodontal and preventive disease treatment is documented as achieving clinically significant reduction of blood sugar levels and, therefore, improves health outcomes and substantially reduces healthcare costs;
- Medical coverage of medically necessary dental treatment for beneficiaries diagnosed with blood and solid tumor cancers, due to the documented association of

such cancers, cancer treatment, and immunosuppression with oral health-related complications during chemotherapy and radiation adjuvant therapies; and

- Medical coverage of medically necessary dental treatment for beneficiaries diagnosed with systemic autoimmune disease complications, which increase the risk of advanced dental decay, tooth loss, and gum disease, and to treat

periodontitis, which is clinically linked to the development of rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune diseases.

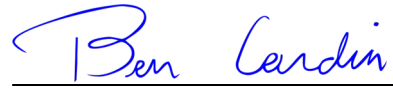
We are grateful for CMS' efforts toward our shared goal of improving the health of Medicare beneficiaries. We therefore appreciate your careful consideration the nominations submitted by stakeholders to further clarify medical coverage of medically necessary dental treatment.

Thank you for your commitment to strengthening the Medicare program. We look forward to continuing to work with CMS to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries receive the care they need.

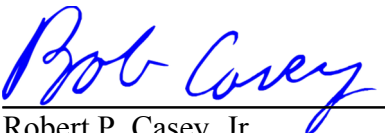
Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



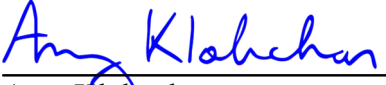
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator