



September 21, 2021

The Honorable Steve Cohen
U.S. House
2104 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Cohen:

On behalf of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), which represents more than 9,000 oral and maxillofacial surgeons (OMSs) in the United States, I would like to thank you for your leadership on oral health issues in Congress, particularly given your introduction of the Medicare Medically Necessary Dental Care Act (HR 5110). This important legislation addresses a significant inconsistency in how dental treatment is covered under Part B for patients undergoing significant – and often lifesaving – medically covered procedures. AAOMS has advocated for Congress and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to address this issue and we pleased to offer our support of your bill.

OMSs understand the important role oral health can have on a patient's overall health. We are surgically and medically trained dental specialists who treat conditions, defects, injuries, and esthetic aspects of the mouth, teeth, jaws, neck, and face. The OMS scope of practice straddles the line between medicine and dentistry, treating conditions that could be dental or medical in nature. In fact, AAOMS maintains a list¹ of oral and maxillofacial surgery services that we consider to be “medically necessary” or “essential” because they are integral to a patient's overall health.

As you are aware, Medicare dental coverage is currently limited to a few procedures involving certain medically compromised patients. For example, Medicare will cover an oral exam for a patient prior to undergoing a Medicare-covered kidney transplant – but not any necessary dental treatment prior to the transplant to ensure the success of the procedure.² Further, an oral exam and dental treatment are not covered for any other transplant procedures or certain medically-covered procedures, such as head and neck cancer, that rely on a healthy mouth for a successful outcome. Your legislation will provide meaningful access to dental care for patients

¹ Essentials of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Services.

https://www.aaoms.org/docs/govt_affairs/advocacy_white_papers/essentials_oms.pdf. Accessed Aug. 26, 2021.

² Medicare Benefit Policy Manual. Chapter 15, Section 150. [www.CMS.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/bp102c15.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/bp102c15.pdf). Accessed May 4, 2021.

requiring prosthetic heart valve replacement and organ transplantation or who are diagnosed with cancer of the head or neck, lymphoma, and leukemia. Should your bill advance and have an opportunity to be amended, we request you to consider also adding coverage for incision and drainage procedures for treatment of severe dental infections, that if left untreated could lead to blood infection, deterioration of the jaw, heart complications, or death.

Again, thank you for your leadership on oral health issues, in particular, through the introduction of HR 5110. We would be pleased to work with you and your colleagues to advance this important legislation. Please contact Jeanne Tuerk, AAOMS director of government affairs, at 800-822-6637, ext. 4321, or jtuerk@aaoms.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B.D. Tiner, DDS, MD, FACS". The signature is written in a cursive style.

B.D. Tiner, DDS, MD, FACS
AAOMS President