

August 7, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) and its 40,000 member dentists, I want to reiterate our commitment to delivering quality dental care to patients of all ages and advocating for optimal oral health for all Americans throughout their lifetime. We hope that Congress will appropriately consider the unforeseen and significant consequences for patients and providers that enacting an unsound policy to expand Medicare to include dental benefits may yield.

As Congress continues deliberations on expanding Medicare to include dental benefits, we would like to offer the following reflections for your consideration from our perspective as providers. Without a robust network of providers willing to participate in any proposed expansion plans, seniors will not receive the dental care they need through federal programs.

At this time, AGD does not feel that dental benefit expansion proposals being circulated would encourage provider participation or address low-income seniors' immediate oral health needs.

Current proposals would essentially take away market-based care delivery choice options many seniors participate in, such as Medicare Advantage (MA) plans. We feel that the proposals being discussed have the obvious potential to undo and reverse decades of enormous progress that dentistry has made in improving and preserving the oral health of our senior citizens.

The Medicare fee schedule setting process was designed for the medical, not dental, coding system. As a result, dental services may end up significantly undervalued. In addition, significant practice expense costs associated with procedures performed in a dentist's office may not be realized or factored into potential payment models.

In any federal program, if reimbursement does not incentivize provider participation and the administrative requirements are too onerous, dental providers will forgo participation in the program, and seniors will not receive quality dental care. The budget projections are unrealistically low and will not support provider participation and the benefits that our seniors need and deserve.



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We look forward to continuing this meaningful conversation with you and your staff as Congress considers how best to provide oral health care to our Nation's seniors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Cassis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bruce Cassis, D.D.S., MAGD  
President  
Academy of General Dentistry