



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

William (Larry) Minnix, Jr., Chair

Representative Diane DeGette
2335 Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Robert Menendez
528 Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510

May 29, 2012

Representative DeGette and Senator Menendez,

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), a national coalition that represents millions of older Americans, would like to thank you for introducing the “Coordination of Pro Bono Medically Recommended Dental Care Act” (H.R. 4091/S. 1878).

This legislation would offer grant support to national dental programs that provide pro-bono dental care to low-income children and adults. This means that medically-necessary dental services would be provided by volunteer dentists with no cost to patients who have serious medical conditions such as diabetes, cancer, autoimmune disease, kidney disease or those in need of organ transplants. This program would help 5,000 Medicare and/or Medicaid beneficiaries receive much-needed care.

Access to dental services is imperative for the health and quality of life of older Americans who are served by LCAO members. As you know, Medicare does not cover routine dental services and Medicaid only provides very limited coverage in certain states. The lack of coverage for dental services, even when medically necessary, often prevents individuals from getting the care they need and, in many cases, can exacerbate existing chronic conditions.

The inability to access affordable dental coverage is especially difficult for Medicare beneficiaries with limited incomes. Many are unable to pay for the cost of dental care out of pocket and as a result are more likely to go without needed services.

Once again, thank you for supporting Medicare beneficiaries by introducing S. 1878/H.R. 4091, the “Coordination of Pro Bono Medically Recommended Dental Care Act.” We hope that Congress will act to provide dental coverage for Medicare beneficiaries in the future, but until then, creating alternative pathways for affordable access to dental services is critical.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO
AFSCME
AGHDHBCU
Alliance for Aging Research
Alliance for Retired Americans
Alzheimer’s Foundation of America
Association of Jewish Aging Services (AJAS)

B'nai B'rith International
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
Easter Seals
Families USA
Gray Panthers
LeadingAge
Lutheran Services in America (LSA)
Medicare Rights Center
National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD)
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council on Aging (NCOA)
National Senior Citizens Law Center (NSCLC)
OWL
Pension Rights Center
PHI – Quality Care through Quality Jobs
SAGE
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women's Institute for A Secure Retirement (WISER)