

New Bill Would Improve Access to Dental Care for Seniors, People with Disabilities, and Low-Income Populations

Today, Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and the Senate Special Committee on Aging **introduced the Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act of 2019, [S.1423](#)**. This represents another milestone in recent efforts to underscore the need for improved coverage of oral health benefits in public health care programs. [S.1423](#) would **add a dental benefit to Part B of the Medicare program**, ensuring seniors and people with disabilities have access to the dental services they need to manage chronic conditions and support their oral and overall health. It would also provide **increased reimbursement to states that choose to cover adult dental benefits in their Medicaid program**. Because adult dental benefits are currently optional for state Medicaid programs, [S.1423](#) would provide a financial incentive for states to cover the comprehensive dental services people with Medicaid coverage need. This would also open up an opportunity for oral health advocates to stress the importance and cost effectiveness of dental benefits in their states' Medicaid program.

The national partners in OPEN are excited to see [S.1423](#), which enhances the public perception of oral health as integral for overall health, integrates dental benefits with other health coverage, and opens the door for millions of Americans to access the care they need. This bill adds more energy to the on-going conversation about the importance of adult and older adult oral health. Thank you all for your continued work on this issue!

From your friends at,

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