



Join the Sjögren's Foundation in Advocating for Medicare Coverage for Medically Necessary Dental Services!

The Sjögren's Foundation has been working hard advocating for patients! We want to especially thank those of you who [reached out to your Congressional representatives](#) and then [completed our survey](#). If we learned anything over the past few months, it is that steady engagement and awareness generating activities make a difference in building support for the millions of Americans living with this serious disease.

This year, we have led the fight to have Medicare cover medically necessary dental services for individuals with Sjögren's and for those with related autoimmune diseases. We are working closely with key stakeholders to engage lawmakers and key Administration officials, presenting data and compelling patient stories which drive home the urgent need to expand dental coverage to Medicare beneficiaries with Sjögren's and other autoimmune diseases. These meetings have been overwhelmingly positive, but it is going to be an all-hands-on deck effort if we are to have any success in moving this issue forward.

Please see below for highlights from Sjögren's Foundation Advocacy Efforts this Spring:

- Sjögren's Foundation President & CEO Janet Church met with members of the Virginia delegation, which represent the Sjögren's Foundation headquarters. Sen. Mark Warner is a key member of the Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Tim Kaine is a member of the Budget Committee; and Rep. Gerry Connolly is a member of the oversight committee.
- Sjögren's Foundation Vice President of Medical & Scientific Affairs Katherine Hammitt represented Sjögren's Foundation in stakeholder meetings with:
 - The White House
 - The Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
 - The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
 - The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
 - The Senate Finance Committee
 - The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP)
 - The House Committee on Ways & Means
 - The House Committee on Energy and Commerce
 - Key House and Senate Congressional Caucuses

We are asking Sjögren's Foundation members to continue to reach out to their Congressional representatives to echo our message to have Medicare cover medically necessary dental services for individuals with Sjögren's and related autoimmune diseases.

This is a critical period as CMS is preparing to publish the proposed rule which will respond to applications submitted to CMS to expand dental coverage to certain services and populations. The



Sjögren's Foundation will submit comments based on the proposed rule and seek further support from Capitol Hill to keep pressure on the Administration to expand coverage to medically necessary dental services.

YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED! Please consider calling or emailing your Congressional representatives and ask them to support the millions of Americans living with Sjögren's. If you do not know your representatives, you can look up your Senators and Representatives in the House at: <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>. Or call 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to your representative.

YOUR TALKING POINTS ARE:

- I am a constituent in your district living with Sjögren's, a serious, systemic autoimmune disease affecting four million Americans.
- Very briefly tell your story here and how Sjögren's has affected your life. Then state: I wanted to ask for your support and help:
 - (1) The Sjögren's Foundation submitted an application to CMS to expand Medicare coverage for medically necessary dental services to beneficiaries with Sjögren's and other autoimmune diseases.
 - **ASK:** The Sjögren's Foundation ("We") are asking Members of Congress to support our application to ensure CMS considers this important issue and continues to engage on this issue of expanding Medicare access to cover medically necessary dental care.
- **FOLLOW UP:** After you contact your representatives, fill out the survey below and our advocacy team will follow up with those offices: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/867HGLW>.

UPDATE ON CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION

We met with several offices to discuss the Congressional resolution but ran out of time before an office could introduce it in April 2023. This remains a top priority item for the Sjögren's Foundation, and we will continue to engage offices over the coming months to secure introduction by April 2024.

The resolution language details key areas of concern for patients in a way that will educate Congress about the disease and help build consistent and accurate messaging within the government and government agencies.

The Sjögren's Foundation was encouraged to see Michigan State Representative Sharon MacDonell introduce a resolution in Michigan commemorating April as Sjögren's Awareness Month. You can read the resolution by [clicking here](#). We will plan to highlight this with the Michigan delegation in Congress and other key offices across the House and Senate. Please reach out if you are interested in advocating for this important effort!