

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2024

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure,

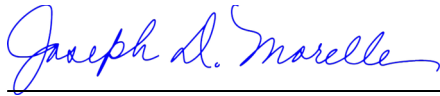
We commend the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for establishing a pathway to review clinical scenarios where payment could be permitted for dental services that are inextricably linked to, and substantially related to the clinical success of, certain Medicare covered services. We are writing in support of nominations to extend coverage of dental services for individuals with autoimmune diseases who are receiving immunosuppressive or immunomodulator therapy (“immunosuppressive therapy”).

Immunosuppression is a broadly shared condition by individuals with autoimmune disease since many require disease-modifying drugs to manage symptoms. Leading medical societies note that patients undergoing immunosuppressive therapy are highly susceptible to serious infections which can result from poor dentition. Such complications may include Cellulitis, Ludwig’s angina, sepsis, and oral mucositis. In fact, individuals with systemic autoimmune disease, such as Sjögren’s disease, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, scleroderma, Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis, and multiple sclerosis, are already at much higher risk of advanced dental decay, dental loss, and/or gum disease.

It is widely understood that reducing oral infection of the mucosa, teeth, and gums through consistent oral management reduces the systemic impact that these conditions have on a patient’s autoimmune disease. Access to dental services would lower the likelihood of complications from immunosuppressive therapy, as it would enable patients to receive dental care prior to initiating such therapy. For these reasons, we urge CMS to consider the available data that supports the need to extend dental coverage for autoimmune disease patients receiving immunosuppressive therapy.

As March is Autoimmune Disease Awareness Month, we urge you to engage with autoimmune disease patient advocacy organizations and key clinical experts on this nomination. We appreciate your consideration and, more importantly, your efforts to improve access to medically necessary oral and dental care for Medicare beneficiaries.

Sincerely,



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Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress



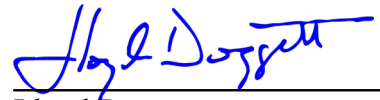
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress




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Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



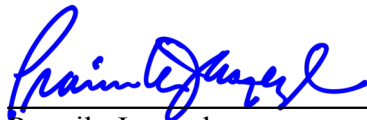
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Tony Cardenas  
Member of Congress



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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Donald G. Davis  
Member of Congress