

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 870

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under part B for medically necessary dental procedures.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 4, 2009

Mr. COHEN (for himself, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mrs. BONO MACK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under part B for medically necessary dental procedures.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS.**

4 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Medicare Medically Necessary Dental Care Act of 2009”.

6 (b) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Oral and general healths are inseparable,
2 and good dental care is critical to our overall phys-
3 ical health and well-being.

4 (2) A 1999 Institute of Medicine study found
5 that the prevention and management of oral infec-
6 tion have significant health implications when such
7 infection has the potential to increase morbidity in
8 Medicare patients who are at risk of adverse out-
9 comes from underlying health problems.

10 (3) Improved oral health care may reduce mor-
11 tality and morbidity rates of Medicare patients suf-
12 fering from head and neck cancer, leukemia,
13 lymphoma, organ transplantation, and heart valve
14 disease.

15 (4) The Medicare program, from its inception,
16 has excluded coverage for services in connection with
17 the care, treatment, filling, removal, or replacement
18 of teeth or structures directly supporting the teeth.

19 (5) The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Serv-
20 ices has approved coverage exceptions for limited
21 dental services and proposed additional exceptions
22 based on the argument that oral health services
23 would reduce the risk of infection and other com-
24 plications of medical care.

1 (6) The Institute of Medicine study concluded
2 that it is reasonable for Congress to update the stat-
3 utory language relating to coverage of dental serv-
4 ices for Medicare beneficiaries so that it clearly cov-
5 ers dental care that is effective in preventing or re-
6 ducing oral and systemic complications associated
7 with serious medical conditions and treatments.

8 **SEC. 2. MEDICARE COVERAGE OF MEDICALLY NECESSARY**
9 **DENTAL PROCEDURES.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1862 of the Social Secu-
11 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 1395y) is amended—

12 (1) in subsection (a)(12)—

13 (A) by inserting “(A)” after “except that”,
14 and

15 (B) by inserting before the semicolon at
16 the end the following: “, and (B) payment may
17 be made under part B for the provision of such
18 dental services that are medically necessary as
19 a direct result of, or will have a direct impact
20 on, an underlying medical condition if the cov-
21 erage of such services is medically necessary, as
22 determined under subsection (n)”; and

23 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
24 section:

1 “(n) For purposes of subsection (a)(12)(B), dental
2 services shall be considered to be medically necessary if
3 furnished—

4 “(1) in conjunction with treatment of an indi-
5 vidual with any of the following diagnoses: prosthetic
6 heart valve replacement, cancer of the head or neck,
7 lymphoma, leukemia, and organ transplantation; and

8 “(2) not later than one year after the later of—

9 “(A) the date of such diagnosis; or

10 “(B) the date of the related surgical or
11 medical treatment for that diagnosis.”.

12 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
13 subsection (a) shall apply to procedures performed on or
14 after January 1, 2010.

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