

September 8, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chair, House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden:

On behalf of our 163,000 members, we respectfully ask your committee to favorably report H.R. 1379, the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act. As the nation's oldest and largest dental professional organization, the American Dental Association (ADA) strongly supports this bipartisan legislation.

As you know, the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act would require all private group and individual health plans to cover medically necessary services resulting from a congenital anomaly or birth defect. One in every 33 children in the United States is born with a congenital anomaly or birth defect that affects the way they look, develop or function. This legislation is crucial to ensure that children suffering from congenital anomalies and birth defects are able to receive the treatment they need.

Many of these congenital anomalies include severe oral and facial defects such as cleft lip or palate, skeletal and maxillofacial deformities, hypodontia (absence of teeth), and enamel hypoplasia. These anomalies can interfere with a child's ability to breathe, speak, and/or eat in a normal manner. Specialized surgery is needed to correct these anomalies. These procedures are reconstructive in nature and are performed to correct abnormal structures of the body.

Despite this, many insurance companies consider these services to be cosmetic, and while they may cover the preliminary surgeries, they will delay or deny follow-up or corrective procedures, including dental work related to the anomaly. This can further delay a child's developmental milestones.

Passage of H.R. 1379 would help patients with craniofacial anomalies, and would also ensure they have the necessary coverage to restore their ability to function. On behalf of our members and their patients, we would like to thank you for considering this important legislation. Please contact Ms. Natalie Hales at (202) 898-2404 or halesn@ada.org with any questions.

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Sincerely,

Chad P. Gehani D.D.S.

Chad P. Gehani, D.D.S.
President

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