



560 W. Lake St. 312.440.4300
Sixth Floor Fax: 312.440.0559
Chicago, IL USA Toll-free: 888.243.3368
60661-6600 agd.org

Statement for the Record by the Academy of General Dentistry

for the

**United States House of Representatives Committee on
Energy & Commerce**

Markup of the *Build Back Better Act*

September 13, 2021

**Bruce Cassis, D.D.S., MAGD
President
Academy of General Dentistry**

560 W. Lake St., Sixth Floor, Chicago, IL 60661

RE: Subtitle I: Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Medicare

Chair Pallone, Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, and members of the Committee, thank you for providing the opportunity to submit a statement for the record for the markup of the *Build Back Better Act*.

The Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) appreciates the Committee on Energy and Commerce's efforts to examine the current state of our Nation's policies and programs related to ensuring our country's health care needs are met.

Founded in 1952, the AGD has over 40,000 members from across the United States and is the only professional association that exclusively represents the needs and interests of general dentists. As the country's second-largest dental association, AGD works to promote oral health to the public and to foster general dentists' continued proficiency through quality continuing education. General dentists are the primary care dental providers that diagnose, treat, and manage a person's overall oral health care needs from childhood to old age.

On behalf of the AGD and its 40,000 member dentists, I want to reiterate our commitment to delivering quality dental care to patients of all ages and advocating for optimal oral health for all Americans throughout their lifetime. We hope that Congress will appropriately consider the unforeseen and significant consequences for patients and providers that enacting an unsound policy to expand Medicare to include dental benefits may yield.

As Congress and the Committee continues deliberations on expanding Medicare to include dental benefits, we would like to offer the following reflections for your consideration from our perspective as providers. Without a robust network of providers willing to participate in any proposed expansion plans, seniors will not receive the dental care they need through federal programs.

At this time, AGD does not feel that the dental benefit expansion proposal included in the *Build Back Better Act* would encourage provider participation or address low-income seniors' immediate oral health needs.

This proposal would essentially take away market-based care delivery choice options many seniors participate in, such as Medicare Advantage (MA) plans. We feel that this proposal has the obvious potential to undo and reverse decades of enormous progress that dentistry has made in improving and preserving the oral health of our senior citizens.

The Medicare fee schedule setting process was designed for the medical, not dental, coding system. As a result, dental services may end up significantly undervalued. In



560 W. Lake St. 312.440.4300
Sixth Floor Fax: 312.440.0559
Chicago, IL USA Toll-free: 888.243.3368
60661-6600 agd.org

addition, significant practice expense costs associated with procedures performed in a dentist's office may not be realized or factored into potential payment models.

In any federal program, if reimbursement does not incentivize provider participation and the administrative requirements are too onerous, dental providers will forgo participation in the program, and seniors will not receive quality dental care. The budget projections are unrealistically low and will not support provider participation and the benefits that our seniors need and deserve.

We look forward to continuing this meaningful conversation with you and your staff as Congress and the Committee considers how best to provide oral health care to our Nation's seniors. If we can answer any questions or provide additional clarification, please contact Daniel J. Buksa, JD, Associate Executive Director, Public Affairs, by phone at (312) 440-4328 or via email at Daniel.buksa@agd.org to let us know how we may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Cassis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bruce Cassis, D.D.S., MAGD
President
Academy of General Dentistry