

January 6, 2020

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
Chairwoman, Health Subcommittee
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess
Ranking Member, Health Subcommittee
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Eshoo and Ranking Member Burgess:

On behalf of our 163,000 members, we are writing to thank you for holding a hearing on 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

CPG:KTO:nh

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