



May XX, 2021

Dear (Senator/Representative),

On behalf of the Fracture Prevention Coalition, we are writing to urge you to cosponsor the *Increasing Access to Osteoporosis Testing for Medicare Beneficiaries Act of 2021*. Osteoporosis and its related bone fractures have a staggering impact on the U.S. health care system. This critical legislation will have a profound effect on access to preventative bone density screening under Medicare for the dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) test administered in a doctor's office.

Despite being recommended by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as a critical preventive test in the "Welcome to Medicare" exam, the reimbursement rate for the DXA test administered in a doctor's office has declined from \$140 in 2007 to only \$39 in 2021, while hospital reimbursements have increased to \$119 for the same procedure.

Because of this drastic cut in reimbursement rates, there has been a 44% decline in DXA test office providers since 2008. In 2019 alone, there were 1.65 million patients with undiagnosed and untreated cases of osteoporosis. This caused 71,775 additional costly hip fractures due to reduced screenings, and unfortunately, 15,647 unnecessary deaths from additional hip fractures. This health crisis has hit minority women especially hard, with 29% fewer Black women tested than white women and 32% fewer Hispanic women tested than white women.

It is vitally important that Medicare beneficiaries have access to health care services that support bone health. Because the risk of osteoporosis increases as bones become thinner with age, Medicare beneficiaries, in particular, need access to bone density screening services. The lack of available testing has put the strain of an additional \$3 billion cost to Medicare to treat hip fractures alone.

Appropriate reimbursement for tests such as DXA that measure bone mass and predict fracture risk is necessary to maintain patient access, particularly in rural or underserved areas. Evidence indicates that people at risk for osteoporosis who receive bone density tests live longer, experience fewer fractures, and save money for all payers, including Medicare, Medicaid, and the private sector.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a crisis in osteoporosis care. Now, osteoporosis testing and treatment that were delayed due to the pandemic are expected to bring even higher fracture rates to Medicare beneficiaries.

In the interest of both women's health and fiscal responsibility, we urge you to cosponsor the *Increasing Access to Osteoporosis Testing for Medicare Beneficiaries Act of 2021*.

Thank you,