

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

The Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act

U.S. Senators Bob Casey and Ben Cardin

Over [148 million](#) people in the United States rely on either Medicare or Medicaid as their primary source of health coverage, yet many lack basic access to dental, vision, or hearing coverage. Poor access to this basic care can pose serious health risks. People with lower incomes are [three times](#) more likely to have four or more untreated cavities than adults with higher incomes or private insurance. In fact, [nearly half](#) of Medicare beneficiaries do not have dental coverage. Vision loss is associated with [increased](#) fall risks and mobility limitations among older adults, while hearing loss is associated with an [increased risk](#) of social isolation and cognitive decline.

The **Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act** would strengthen coverage for dental, vision, and hearing services under Medicare by repealing the statutory exclusion that restricts coverage of such services and expanding coverage to offer:

- **Dental and oral care;** including coverage of routine cleanings and exams, fillings and crowns, major services such as root canals and extractions, emergency dental care and other necessary services, and payment for both full and partial dentures.
- **Vision care;** including routine eye exams, procedures performed to determine the refractive state of the eyes and other necessary services, and payment for eyeglasses, contact lenses, and low-vision devices.
- **Hearing care;** including hearing exams, exams for hearing aids and other necessary services, and payment for hearing aids.

This legislation also encourages states to provide these optional services to people with Medicaid by increasing the associated Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) rate to 90 percent.