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Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons applaud Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) for introducing legislation to require insurance coverage for children with congenital deformities

[Rosemont, IL] The [American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons \(AAOMS\)](#) applauds Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) on introducing [S. 1235, the Senate companion bill to H.R. 1339, the Children's Access to Reconstructive Evaluation and Surgery \(CARES\) Act](#). The bill would require insurance plans that provide surgical benefits, including those under the [Employee Retirement Income Security Act \(ERISA\)](#), to cover reconstructive surgeries for children with congenital deformities, including craniofacial anomalies. The CARES Act would set an important national standard for ensuring that families who have insurance coverage receive the necessary care for their children with these conditions.

Each year, approximately 1 child in 600 is born with some type of craniofacial abnormality that may result in distortion of facial tissue, the oral cavity, and the skull. The most widely known craniofacial conditions are cleft lip and palate. Oral and maxillofacial surgeons donate thousands of hours each year performing corrective surgery on children suffering from congenital deformities who are uninsured or living in medically underserved areas. However, thousands of children currently covered under health insurance plans are not able to receive corrective surgery because insurers deem the procedures "cosmetic" and deny the claims. While craniofacial anomalies may affect appearance, they often impede a child's ability to chew food, speak normally and perform other quality of life functions.

AAOMS appreciates Senator Landrieu's leadership in advocating that corrective surgery for craniofacial anomalies is medically necessary and should be defined as reconstructive surgery rather than cosmetic surgery. "No child, particularly those born with congenital deformities, should be denied life-altering surgery," Senator Landrieu said. "This legislation will put an end to the practice that has misclassified thousands of legitimate health care claims and will ultimately provide children the coverage for the surgical procedures they need to grow and thrive. The passage of this bill is long overdue and I look forward to building bipartisan support for its approval."

AAOMS members have worked closely with Senator Landrieu on the CARES Act since she was the lead sponsor of the bill during the 110th Congress and look forward to continuing the relationship and securing passage of this important legislation in the 111th Congress.

***Saving Faces|Changing Lives™** — The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), the professional organization representing more than 8,000 oral and maxillofacial surgeons in the United States, supports its fellows' and members' ability to practice their specialty through education, research and advocacy. AAOMS fellows and members comply with rigorous continuing education requirements and submit to periodic office examinations, ensuring the public that all office procedures and personnel meet stringent national standards.*