

AAOMS applauds federal legislation to enable Medicare patients to rehabilitate and recover more efficiently from oral and maxillofacial injuries

[Rosemont, IL] The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) applauds the introduction of the “Medicare Oral Health Rehabilitative Enhancement Act of 2011” (H.R. 2863), which would amend current law prohibiting dentists from referring their Medicare patients for physical therapy.

Introduced on September 7, by US Representatives Dave Reichert (R-WA) and Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), H.R. 2863 would revise the current statute, which requires that dentists must refer their Medicare patients to an allopathic or osteopathic physician to establish a therapy plan. If enacted, the legislation would allow oral and maxillofacial surgeons and other dentists to refer their Medicare patients directly for physical therapy.

“This bill is a common sense fix to Medicare regulations that will make the delivery of specialized physical therapy services more efficient and I am happy to support it,” noted Rep. Reichert, while Rep. Pascrell added, “Our simple, bipartisan legislation will save Medicare resources and precious time for patients and practitioners. I will continue to push to fix the referral issue so that patients have access to the continuum of care they need and to reduce the red tape between patients and their doctors.”

Oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMS)—the surgical specialty of dentistry—is regularly employed to treat patients with medical conditions that require physical therapy. These conditions include facial trauma such as jaw fractures, temporomandibular joint disorder (TMJ) and reconstructive procedures. In most cases, these conditions require some form of physical therapy after treatment.

In addition to increasing overall health care efficiency, the AAOMS believes that this “budget neutral” legislation will save money by removing the unnecessary step in obtaining referrals. Furthermore, it has the support of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. [Click to view the text of the bill.](#)

***Saving Faces, Changing Lives** — The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), the professional organization representing more than 9,000 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.*

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