



SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Chairman Bob Casey

The Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision and Hearing Benefit Act (S. 2618)

Introduced by Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Cardin (D-MD)

Why do we need the *Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision and Hearing Benefit Act*?

More than [130 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. Low-income individuals are [three times](#) as likely to have four or more untreated cavities as adults with higher incomes or private insurance and [15 percent](#) of older adults have lost all of their teeth due to untreated dental disease. Vision loss is associated with an [increased](#) risk of falls and mobility limitations among older adults and hearing loss is associated with an [increased risk](#) of social isolation and cognitive decline.

All older adults, people with disabilities and low-income families deserve access to affordable and comprehensive health care that includes dental, vision and hearing benefits.

What would the *Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision and Hearing Benefit Act* do?

The *Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act* will 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 Health Care

- Coverage of dental and oral health services, including 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

- Vision services, 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

- Hearing services, including hearing exams, exams for hearing aids and other necessary services; and
- Payment for hearing aids.

The bill will also encourage States to provide these optional services to people with Medicaid by offering a 90 percent FMAP, meaning the federal government would cover 90 percent of the cost, to do so.