

The Honorable  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

The undersigned dental organizations strongly encourage you to cosponsor H.R. 5590, "Medicare Oral Health Rehabilitative Act of 2008."

H.R. 5590 is a budget neutral bill that will strengthen and enhance the Medicare program by allowing dentists to refer their patients directly to physical therapy (PT) services. Dentists routinely treat patients for conditions that require physical therapy such as jaw fractures, temporomandibular joint disorder (TMJ), and reconstruction procedures subsequent to pathological and/or congenital anomalies.

Current Medicare statute prohibits dentists from the direct referral of patients for PT. Instead, current law requires a dentist to initially refer patients to an allopathic or osteopathic physician (including fields such as podiatry and optometry) and/or work with a physician to establish a therapy plan when a dentist believes PT should be part of a patient's treatment. Such consultation has proven to be an unnecessary financial burden to the patient and the Medicare system and it ultimately delays patient treatment and disrupts the continuum of care.

This necessary legislation will save significant time and Medicare resources by allowing dentists to directly refer for outpatient physical therapy and to establish and monitor therapy plans of care for their patients.

We hope that you will cosponsor H.R. 5590 to provide patient access to necessary PT services, restore oral health and quality of life, and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and cost that currently slow the rehabilitative process.

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry  
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology  
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry  
American Academy of Periodontology  
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons  
American Association of Orthodontists  
American College of Prosthodontists  
American Dental Association  
Hispanic Dental Association  
National Dental Association