

Congenital Craniofacial Anomalies



Support the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA) to ensure health plans cover treatment for patients with congenital craniofacial anomalies.

Why is federal congenital craniofacial anomalies legislation needed?



Congenital craniofacial conditions may appear cosmetic, but they impede daily functioning and can restrict the ability to breathe, eat and speak. Corrective procedures allow patients to grow and function normally.



Many private health insurers cover initial procedures for congenital craniofacial anomalies but deny or delay subsequent medically necessary procedures – including orthodontia and dental implants – deeming them cosmetic or dentally-covered.



Dental coverage limits are much lower than those of health plans. So, patients may pay significant out-of-pocket costs for medically necessary treatment related to their condition, despite maintaining private health coverage.



ERISA plans are exempt from state requirements for coverage of congenital craniofacial anomalies. Federal legislation is essential to ensure coverage.

Approximately

1 in every 33 babies*

born in the United States each year has a congenital anomaly, commonly referred to as a birth defect.

Examples of congenital craniofacial anomalies – deformities in the growth of the bones and soft tissue in the head and face – include cleft lip and palate, skeletal and maxillofacial deformities, facial paralysis, microtia, hypodontia (absence of teeth) and craniosynostosis.

*According to the CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

AAOMS's ask of Congress



**Co-sponsor the
Ensuring Lasting
Smiles Act
(S 1677/HR 3277)**

- The bipartisan, bicameral Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA) was reintroduced in the 119th Congress by Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) and Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and Reps. Neal Dunn, MD (R-Fla.) and Kim Schrier, MD (D-Wash.).
- **ELSA would close loopholes to ensure all group and individual health plans cover provider-directed medically necessary services as a result of a congenital anomaly of the eyes, ears, teeth, mouth or jaw.**
- ELSA last passed the House in April 2022 during the 117th Congress. Since then, the bill sponsors and a broad coalition of ELSA supporting organizations have worked together to incorporate feedback and strengthen ELSA's language to focus exclusively on the craniofacial region.
- **ELSA has the support of both health professional and patient advocacy organizations.**
- To learn more or co-sponsor, contact the office of Sen. Baldwin, Sen. Ernst, Rep. Dunn and Rep. Schrier.