



The new name of the National Osteoporosis Foundation

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July 27, 2022

The Honorable Pallone, Chair
The Honorable McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member
Energy & Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers,

On behalf of our national organizations advocating for women's health, aging, family caregivers, and bone health (listed below), we are writing to share **our strong support to pass H.R. 3517, the Increasing Access to Osteoporosis Testing for Medicare Beneficiaries Act of 2021**. We greatly appreciate the leadership of Representatives Burgess, Trahan, Larson, Walorski, Sanchez and all the bill's cosponsors. Passage of this bipartisan legislation would be an important step towards reducing the enormous human and financial toll associated with osteoporotic fractures.

Osteoporosis is a costly and often ignored public health crisis. In the U.S., more than 54 million people, mostly women, either have osteoporosis (a chronic disease that weakens bones leading to fractures) or are at high risk of the disease due to low bone density. Patients with type 2 diabetes display an increased fracture risk and prevention of potential risk factors for osteoporosis are crucial to preserve a good quality of life. In 2021, a study commissioned of the actuarial firm Milliman found that 2.1 million osteoporotic fractures were suffered by 1.8 million Medicare beneficiaries in 2016. More women die in the United States in the year following a hip fracture than from breast cancer and one out of four who have an osteoporotic hip fracture will need long-term nursing home care. In addition, the total annual cost for osteoporotic fractures among Medicare beneficiaries was \$57 billion in 2018, projected to grow to over \$95 billion in 2040, as our population ages. Attached are reports on the impact of fractures in your home states of New Jersey and Washington.

The USPSTF recommends screening for osteoporosis with bone measurement testing to prevent osteoporotic fractures in women 65 years and older and postmenopausal women under 65 at increased risk of osteoporosis. Millions of cancer survivors in the US (breast and prostate cancer survivors treated with hormone therapy and cancer survivors whose treatments caused early menopause in women or low testosterone in men) are at increased risk for osteoporosis. While early detection and intervention through screening is an important tool to reduce these fractures, it is woefully underutilized. Medicare payments for osteoporosis screening have been cut by over 70 percent since 2007, resulting in a major drop in the number of screening providers and the number of beneficiaries being screened. The 2021 Milliman report found that **only 8 percent of female Medicare beneficiaries who suffer a fracture were**

screened for osteoporosis; for Black women the screening rate was just 4 percent. Screening rates for Asians was 9 percent, Whites 8 percent, Hispanics 7 percent and North American Natives 6 percent.

H.R. 3517 would improve access to osteoporosis screening by setting a floor rate for reimbursement for osteoporosis screening. The bipartisan bill would cut the number of osteoporotic fractures by increasing the number of available providers and the number of beneficiaries getting recommended screening.

We know that the Committee has many requests and challenges before it. However, the magnitude of the human and fiscal impact of osteoporotic fractures and the clear need to boost screening warrants action now.

Thank you so much for considering our request and we stand ready to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free contact Claire Gill, CEO of the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation at cgill@bonehealthandosteoporosis.org for any information needed.

Sincerely,

Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation

Alliance for Aging Research

Alport Syndrome Foundation

American Bone Health

Black Women's Health Imperative

Cancer Fashionista

Cancer Support Community

Carrie's TOUCH

Center for Patient Advocacy Leaders

Chronic Disease Coalition

Global Healthy Living Foundation

Global Liver Institute

HealthyWomen

Michelle's Place Cancer Resource Center

National Asian Pacific Center on Aging

Obesity Action Coalition

Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation



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The new name of the National Osteoporosis Foundation
Society for Women's Health Research

The AIDS Institute

The Autoimmune Association

The Celiac Disease Foundation

The National Council on Aging

The National Spine Health Foundation

Touch, the Black Breast Cancer Alliance

cc: The Honorable Richard Neal, Chairman, Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, Ways and Means Committee