



Preservation of Access to Osteoporosis Testing for Medicare Beneficiaries Act (S. 1096/H.R. 2020)

The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) is the nation's leading consumer and community-focused health organization solely dedicated to osteoporosis and bone health. An important part of our mission is advocating for health policies that promote access to quality care, osteoporosis prevention and education initiatives and bone health research.

NOF urges Congress to improve access to bone density testing, which is critical to detecting osteoporosis and preventing debilitating and costly fractures *before* they occur.



Impact of Osteoporosis

- Osteoporosis and low bone density are estimated to affect 44 million Americans.
- Experts estimate that osteoporosis is responsible for more than 2 million fractures annually, with the number of fractures expected to rise to more than 3 million by 2025.
- The total cost of all fractures is estimated at \$19 billion each year, and the government pays most of these fracture costs because 87% of osteoporotic fractures are incurred by people age 65 and older.

Current Problem

- Although Congress enacted a temporary solution to the problems caused by Medicare cuts in reimbursement rates for dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) tests, the two-year provision will expire at the end of this year.
- For Medicare beneficiaries, access to osteoporosis diagnosis, prevention and treatment once again could be jeopardized because reimbursement for DXA tests will plummet by about 50% on January 1, 2012.
- If reimbursement rates are not restored, patients and those at risk for osteoporosis may be unable to readily access DXA tests in their communities, causing them to travel long distances to new locations, and some may forego being tested.

Recognition of Importance of DXA Tests

- DXA tests are recognized by the World Health Organization, the U.S. Surgeon General and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as the standard for diagnosing osteoporosis.
- DXA tests help predict a person's chances of fracturing and help monitor and evaluate a patient's osteoporosis treatment.
- The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening for osteoporosis in women age 65 and older and in younger women whose fracture risk is equal to or greater than that of a 65-year-old woman who has no additional risk factors.
- Research studies demonstrate that increased DXA testing leads to a decrease in hip fractures and saves money.

To improve access to bone density testing and prevent debilitating and costly fractures, NOF urges Congress to pass the Medicare Fracture Prevention and Osteoporosis Testing Act to:

- Restore Medicare reimbursement rates for DXA tests of the central skeleton (hip and spine).

