



Medicare Fracture Prevention and Osteoporosis Testing Act (S. 769 / H.R. 1894)

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 public health policies that promote access to quality care, education and prevention initiatives and bone health and osteoporosis 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.
- It is estimated 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 new 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.

Recognition of Importance of DXA Tests

- Dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (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 that all women age 65 and older be tested and that routine testing for those at increased risk for fracture begin at age 60.
- Studies demonstrate that increased DXA testing leads to a decrease in hip fractures and saves money.

Current Problem

- Although health reform legislation has temporarily provided a solution to cuts in DXA reimbursement for tests in physician offices that had been reduced 60% below the 2006 level, making it more difficult for physicians to provide DXA testing in their offices, a more comprehensive solution will be necessary.
- Patients may have to find another provider and travel long distances to a new location with a different DXA machine, which will require a new baseline score if reimbursement rates are not restored.
- Only about 1 in 4 women Medicare beneficiaries take advantage of Medicare coverage of DXA tests, yet about 70% of Medicare-allowed DXA tests were conducted in physician offices during 2002-2007.

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 funding for, improve access to, and increase utilization of DXA tests of the central skeleton (hip and spine) by restoring reimbursement rates to 2006 levels.
- Authorize a study of how reduced reimbursement affects patients.

