

State-Level Action Steps to Improve Bone Health & Combat Osteoporosis Reforms Can Improve Care and Lower Medicaid Costs

Over 10 million Americans, 70 percent of them women, suffer from osteoporosis, a chronic disease that leads to thinning bones and over 2 million costly and debilitating fractures every year.

Osteoporosis costs the nation over \$54 billion a year, including growing Medicaid costs to states for the nursing home care required by many of those who suffer fractures. While we know how to build strong bones and how to prevent many of these fractures, many people lack awareness of the steps they can take, and government policies fail to ensure proper care for those with osteoporosis.

Below are several policy options available to states that would greatly improve health and reduce costs. To find individual reports on the costs and impact of osteoporosis in your state as well as more information about bone health and how to improve bone health policy, visit BHOFF's website at www.bonehealthandosteoporosis.org.

State Medicaid Managed Care Plan Contract Improvements

States' contracts with managed care plans contracting to provide Medicaid services can play an important role in leveraging improved bone health and osteoporosis care.

- Include quality/performance measures on bone health for all Medicaid managed care plans. This should include the percentage of women over 50 being screened for osteoporosis and all plan members receiving information about how to build strong bones over a lifetime.
- Require all plans for dual (Medicaid/Medicare) eligibles to cover fracture liaison services (FLS) care management for all those admitted to nursing facilities/home health as a result of a hospitalization for an osteoporotic fracture. FLS has been demonstrated over decades to reduce fracture rates and reduce costs.
- Include a quality/performance measure for dual eligible plans on the percentage of osteoporotic fracture patients in long-term supports and services (LTSS) receiving FLS.

Educate/Advocate for Federal Reforms

1.8 million Medicare beneficiaries suffer over 2 million osteoporotic fractures. Medicare covers the costs of effective screening and treatment. Yet only about 8 percent of those who suffer fractures receive screening and around 20 percent receive treatments that can lower their risk of another fracture by 50 percent.

- Educate your federal Congressional counterparts on the need to improve care for those with osteoporosis. By better incentivizing good care, including fracture liaison services care coordination, Medicare can reduce the rate of fractures, save lives and lower federal and state government and health care costs.

Medicaid Cost Data

One of the first steps towards driving improved bone health policy and better care for those with osteoporosis is to identify the costs to your state driven by osteoporosis and the fractures it causes.

- Ask the state Medicaid agency to provide detailed data on the cost of osteoporosis care. This should include LTSS costs for those who have suffered an osteoporotic fracture, hospital and physician costs as well as rehabilitation costs.

Health Professional Workforce Training Funding

A shortage of health professionals with the right training to care for those with osteoporosis, many of whom are elderly, can reduce access to and quality of care. This in turn can increase costs by failing to prevent costly fractures and their resulting nursing home costs.

- Include support for training in bone health and geriatrics in any state-funded initiative for the training of health professionals.

Bone Health Education and Awareness

There are basic steps that can be taken to strengthen bone health and improve care for those who with osteoporosis. Yet, many Americans don't have basic information about bone health and osteoporosis and are unaware of what they can do.

- Support initiatives through schools, senior centers, community health centers, hospitals and clinics to educate citizens about bone health and the steps they can take to protect themselves and their loved ones. Steps include a diet rich in calcium and vitamin D, regular weight-bearing exercise, ending tobacco use, age-appropriate bone density screening, falls prevention education and appropriate treatment for those with osteoporosis.
- Declare every May to be osteoporosis awareness and prevention month by enacting [state resolutions or Governor Proclamation](#) and initiative state-wide education and awareness campaigns.

About the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation

Established in 1984, the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation is the nation's leading health organization dedicated to promoting strong bones for life, preventing osteoporosis and broken bones, and reducing human suffering through programs of awareness, education, advocacy, and research. For more information on the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation, visit www.bonehealthandosteoporosis.org.