Please cosponsor and support the bipartisan, bicameral Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA), which will be reintroduced by Senate leads, Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA), and House leads, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo (D-CA-18) and Congressman Drew Ferguson (R-GA-3), later this year for the 118th Congress.

In the 117th Congress, this bill gained strong bipartisan support from 62 U.S. Senate cosponsors, 317 U.S. House cosponsors, and passed in the U.S. House of Representatives with a 310-110 vote. In preparation for ELSA’s reintroduction in the 118th Congress, the bill leads and a broad coalition of ELSA supporting organizations have worked together to incorporate feedback and received several rounds of technical assistance to strengthen ELSA’s language. ELSA is endorsed by a broad coalition of 70+ national health care professional and patient advocacy organizations (see back).

Summary: This bipartisan legislation would require a group health plan, and a health insurance issuer offering group or individual health insurance coverage, to provide coverage for outpatient and inpatient items and services related to the diagnosis and treatment of a congenital anomaly or birth defect, including any medically necessary item or service to achieve normal body functioning and clarifies coverage for adjunctive dental, orthodontic, or prosthodontic support. The bill explicitly excludes coverage of cosmetic surgeries.

Background: About four percent of children in the U.S. are born with congenital anomalies that affect the way they look, develop, or function. Many born with congenital anomalies suffer from severe oral defects (such as cleft lip or palate, hypodontia, enamel hypoplasia), skeletal defects (such as craniosynostosis), vision defects (such as congenital cataracts or aphakia), hearing defects (such as microtia), or other loss of bodily functions. Individuals who do not receive timely, continuous care for their congenital anomalies face long-term physical and psychological injuries.

Problem: Most group and individual health plans include coverages for congenital anomalies, and all 50 states require health insurers to provide coverage for the treatment of congenital anomalies. Despite this, health plans systematically and routinely deny or delay claims and appeals for treatment of congenital anomalies by wrongfully categorizing certain treatments or body parts as cosmetic or not medically necessary. This is a common practice that leaves families with the burden of paying 100% of the cost for their child’s medically necessary treatments, despite maintaining private health plans.

Solution: The Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act will close loopholes and ensure that group and individual health plans do not deny or delay medically necessary treatments of congenital anomalies, therefore improving the health of countless Americans.

Contact Information: To learn more or cosponsor, please contact (Senate) Sen. Baldwin’s or Sen. Ernst’s office or (House) Rep. Eshoo’s or Rep. Ferguson’s office.
Academy of General Dentistry
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
American Association of Orthodontists
American Association of Women Dentists
American Behcet’s Disease Association
American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association
American College of Prosthodontists
American College of Surgeons
American Dental Association
American Prosthodontic Society
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists
American Society of Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Society of Pediatric Otolaryngology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
Association of Dental Support Organizations
Barth Syndrome Foundation
Born a Hero Research Foundation
Bridge the Gap – SYNGAP Education and Research Foundation
CCD Smiles
CDH International
Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin
Colorado Rare
Costello Syndrome Family Network
Crane Dental Laboratory
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Derma Care Access Network
Ear Community, Inc.
EveryLife Foundation for Rare Diseases

Face-To-Face Colorado
FACES: The National Craniofacial Association
FD/MAS Alliance
Foundation for Ichthyosis and Related Skin Types, Inc. (FIRST)
Genetic Alliance
Georgia Prosthodontics
Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare
International Pemphigus and Pemphigoid Foundation
Karen S McAndrew DMD, MS, PLC
Lawrence C. Wright Craniofacial Center at John R. Oishei Children's Hospital
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association
Lymphedema Advocacy Group
M-CM Network
March of Dimes
Moebius Syndrome Foundation
myFace
National Association of Dental Laboratories
National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias
National Organization for Rare Disorders
Noah's Hope – Hope4Bridget
Operation Smile
Ozark Prosthodontics
Pathways for Rare and Orphan Studies
Project Accessible Oral Health
Rare & Undiagnosed Network
rareLife solutions
Smile Train
Soft Bones: The US Hypophosphatasia Foundation
SunnyStrong
The APS Type 1 Foundation Inc.
The Marfan Foundation
The XLH Network, Inc.
The Sturge-Weber Foundation
Usher 1F Collaborative
Virginia Council of Nurse Practitioners
Wisconsin Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Association (WSHA)