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**ORAL HEALTH AMERICA APPLAUDS ORAL HEALTH PROVISIONS  
IN HEALTH CARE REFORM**

March 26, 2010, Chicago, IL—The health care reform bill passed by Congress, and now signed into law by President Obama, includes many provisions that will improve the nation’s oral health. Most significantly, the bill does guarantee oral health coverage for children and allows for resources to extend oral disease prevention measures in every state. Over time, the bill’s provisions can help to increase access to care for all ages.

“Oral Health America supports the numerous measures of the health care reform bill that represent real commitment on the part of our lawmakers to improve our nation’s oral health,” said Beth Truett, President and CEO, Oral Health America. “This is a great start, and we look forward to continued health reform opportunities to ensure that all Americans are able to obtain the preventive and restorative care they need.”

According to the bill, oral health care for children under 21 must be included in any essential benefit package offered by any health insurance exchange.

To help extend access to preventive care, the bill allows for school-based sealant programs in all 50 states, and an oral health education program targeting vulnerable populations, including children, pregnant women and older Americans. The bill also allows for grants totaling \$60 million to be awarded to up to 15 programs to train or employ alternative dental health providers.

The Medicaid limit is now set at 133 percent of the Federal poverty level, meaning an additional 16 million people will be eligible for Medicaid coverage. Medicaid dental benefits for adults are still optional for states to provide or not, but states can no longer drop dental benefit packages they currently offer. Prior to the passage of the bill, Arizona was the last state in a disturbing national trend to drop its adult Medicaid dental program, and the first state to drop its Medicaid/Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), adversely affecting 38,000 low income children.

For America’s growing population aged 65 and older, the bill represents no change to the fact that Medicare does not provide routine dental care benefits.

Oral Health America is a national, charitable non-profit, dedicated to connecting communities with resources to increase access to oral health care, education and advocacy for all Americans, especially those most vulnerable. For more information, visit [www.oralhealthamerica.org](http://www.oralhealthamerica.org).

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