



S. 1677/H.R. 3277, the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA)

Please become a cosponsor of the bipartisan *Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA)*, led in the Senate by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Joni Ernst (R-IA) and in the House by Representatives Neal Dunn (R-FL-2) and Kim Schrier (D-WA-8).

Approximately 1 in every 33 babies born in the United States each year has a congenital anomaly, commonly referred to as a birth defect. Children born with congenital anomalies that affect the eyes, ears, teeth, mouth, or jaw are routinely denied coverage of medically necessary services by private insurers, leading to secondary health issues and leaving families without access to care.

Congenital craniofacial conditions may appear cosmetic, but they often impede daily functioning and may restrict a patient's ability to breathe, eat and speak. Corrective procedures allow these patients to grow and function normally.

Health insurers wrongfully categorize treatments for these body parts as cosmetic (not medically necessary) or as a non-covered service, even though those insurers claim to provide coverage for the treatment of congenital anomalies. Rarely are medically necessary treatments denied for children with other congenital anomalies such as a congenital heart condition or musculoskeletal issues.

The *Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA)* is bicameral, bipartisan legislation that would clarify health coverage for children born with congenital anomalies and birth defects (e.g., cleft lip and cleft palate, missing dental structures) that affect their oral and overall health and well-being and require dental/oral restorative care. In particular, ELSA would clarify that the standard of care for individuals born with such abnormalities is to provide coverage for medically necessary dental surgery and treatment.

The *Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act* would address health insurance coverage denials and delays and ensure that children suffering from congenital craniofacial anomalies or birth defects get the treatment they need and deserve.

Specifically, the legislation would:

Ensure that all group and individual health plans cover outpatient and inpatient items and services related to the diagnosis and treatment of a congenital anomaly or birth defect that primarily impacts the appearance or function of the eyes, ears, teeth, mouth, or jaw;

Stipulate that such coverage include services and procedures that improve, repair, or restore function due to a congenital anomaly or birth defect, including treatment to any missing or abnormal body part that the treating physician determines is medically necessary. The bill makes clear that this includes adjunctive dental, orthodontic, or prosthodontic support; and excludes cosmetic procedures or surgery.

This common-sense bill would close these loopholes and ensure families receive the coverages they pay for and deserve for the duration of their treatment plan.

Passing ELSA would ensure that children born with congenital anomalies have access to the highest clinical standard of care and qualified providers, enabling them to see, hear, chew, swallow and speak - basic rights we take for granted and all deserve. Allowing children to access treatments in a timely manner avoids the long-term physiological and psychosocial injuries associated with delays in care.

In the 117th Congress, ELSA gained bicameral, bipartisan support from 62 Senate cosponsors and passed the House of Representatives with a 310-110 vote.

An expedited score from CBO has been requested for the 119th Congress. Clarification of the scope of the bill should address areas of uncertainty previously raised by CBO.

Contact (Senate) Sen. Baldwin's or Sen. Ernst's office or (House) Rep. Schrier's or Rep. Dunn's office for more information.

List of Professional and Patient Organizations Supporting ELSA

(Hyperlinks are active when viewed on computer)

[American Association for Dental Oral and Craniofacial Research](#)

[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 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, Inc.](#)

[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 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](#)

[Suey Morgan, DDS - Boston Medical Center](#)

[SunnyStrong](#)

[The APS Type 1 Foundation Inc.](#)

[The Marfan Foundation](#)

[The XLH Network, Inc.](#)

[The Sturge-Weber Foundation The TMJ Association, LTD.](#)

[University of Minnesota Cleft & Craniofacial Clinic](#)

[Usher IF Collaborative](#)

[Virginia Council of Nurse Practitioners](#)

[Wisconsin Speech-Language Pathology and
Audiology Association \(WSHA\)](#)