

Support Improved Access to Osteoporosis Testing in Medicare

Senate: Support S. 283, the Increasing Access to Osteoporosis Testing for Medicare Beneficiaries Act

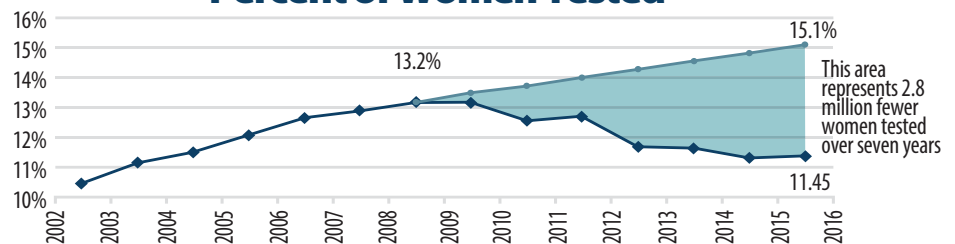
House: Introduce companion legislation to S. 283

- ✓ Provides a sustainable Medicare payment for DXA bone density scans performed in a physician's office.
- ✓ Preserves access to osteoporosis testing, prevention, and treatment services.

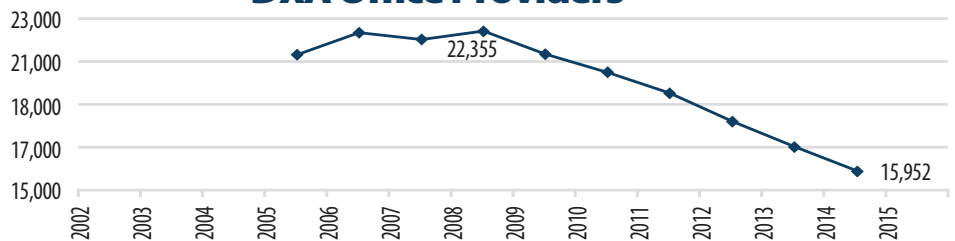
Osteoporosis, which causes bones to become brittle and porous and likely break, is tested by measuring bone density with a dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) machine. A DXA test identifies patients with a high risk of bone fracture and is used to monitor the effectiveness of medical therapy to prevent and treat osteoporosis. DXA is considered the "gold standard" for osteoporosis testing by the medical community and should be readily accessible to the 54 million Americans who suffer from low bone density or osteoporosis, but declining reimbursement rates are making access more difficult.

Medicare reimbursement for DXA has dropped 70% in the last decade—from \$140 in 2007 to \$42 in 2018. **Current payment rates do not cover the physician's cost of providing these services,** resulting in a reduced capacity to provide DXA services and fewer women being tested.

Percent of Women Tested



DXA Office Providers



CONTINUED ON BACK

Why Is Maintaining Access to DXA So Important?

- Approximately one in every two women and up to one in every four men over the age of 50 will break a bone due to osteoporosis.
 - ◆ 25% of women over the age of 50 who sustain a hip fracture die in the year following the fracture, 50% never walk independently again, and 20% require permanent nursing home placement, at an enormous cost to government health programs.
 - ◆ Older women who have a DXA scan have 35% fewer hip fractures than those who are not tested.
- Medicare paid over \$16 billion in 2010 for direct costs of new fractures, and that number is projected to grow to over \$25 billion by 2025.
- A DXA bone density test is currently covered every two years as part of the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit, in addition to being part of the Welcome to Medicare exam.
- Incentives for using preventive health services, like a DXA test, are meaningless if patients cannot access the service in their community.