



NATIONAL GRANGE

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American Values. Hometown Roots.

September 23, 2021

Representative Neal,

The National Grange is writing today to express the sentiments of our membership about osteoporosis screening accessibility. Since our founding in 1867, the National Grange has worked with administrations of both parties to create policies which support rural America. Today, the National Grange serves as the national voice of over 150,000 rural Americans from all across the country. In this mission, the National Grange, in conjunction with the Fracture Prevention Coalition, is working to improve access to osteoporosis screening around the country by passing H.R. 3517, the *Increasing Access to Osteoporosis Testing for Medicare Beneficiaries Acts of 2021*.

Fractures caused by osteoporosis are among the most significant challenges threatening the independence and quality of life of our older Americans, a group which is disproportionately represented in rural America. The unfortunate truth that more people die every year following a hip fracture than die from breast cancer starkly illustrates this point.

This is an issue of significant concern as it relates to the Medicare policy priorities of the National Grange and aligns with our goal that Medicare dollars should also be spent on health screening for early intervention of diseases which is far more economical than the huge cost of treating advanced stages of the diseases. Osteoporosis is a serious and deadly disease that is treatable when properly diagnosed with a DXA Bone Density Scan.

Unfortunately, Medicare cuts have resulted in drastic declines in DXA testing, the diagnosis of Osteoporosis and in the number of skilled health care professionals who provide this critical diagnostic test. Rural parts of the country have been harder hit by access issues where DXA screening is already lower and we've actually seen an uptick in hip fracture rates around the country. The delay of preventive services like DXA during the pandemic has made a dire situation worse; fractures due to delayed DXA testing and treatment are expected to result in even higher fracture rates bringing more lives lost, more loss of independence, and more cost to Medicare.

On behalf of The National Grange and our over 150,000 members throughout rural America, we urge you to support DXA testing and to become a co-sponsor of the critical proposal in H.R. 3517 so that we can begin to reverse this dangerous trend.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy E. Huber".

Betsy Huber
President
National Grange