



Policy Proposal: Dental Care for Veterans

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We honor our veterans by treating them with the respect and dignity they deserve. At the very least that includes providing VA dental coverage.

We should thank our veterans for their service.

Every chance we get.

We should also give them dental coverage.

Agreed.

Surely we do that already?

Only for a very small subset of our veterans.

The details are complicated but essentially VA dental care eligibility only extends to veterans with a service-connected disability (rated at 100%), those with a service-connected dental condition, homeless veterans, and former POWs. If dental care is needed to treat another service-connected condition, that may also be eligible.

How many veterans do we actually give dental care to?

Out of 8.83 million VA enrollees, 534,000 receive VA dental care. Even including veterans who purchase dental care through the VA's Dental Insurance Program only adds another 80,000.

My dentist tells me dental care is quite important.

It is – poor oral health is closely linked with chronic health conditions that veterans are disproportionately likely to suffer from, like diabetes, respiratory illness, and heart disease.

More than 3.6 million veterans have visited ER departments for dental pain since leaving the military, with an estimated cost for those visits of \$5.4 billion.



And Congress is surely going to fix this glaring hole?

A 2025 bill (H.R.210 - Dental Care for Veterans Act) would make all veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system eligible for VA-provided dental services.

The bill has 84 cosponsors, including NY delegates Joe Morelle, Tim Kennedy, Paul Tonko, Josh Riley, Pat Ryan, Grace Meng, and Tom Suozzi.

Unlike Rep. Clarke, I would view it as a great privilege to cosponsor a bill that would improve the health, well-being, and quality of life of our veteran community.



Sources include:

- <https://juliabrownley.house.gov/brownley-introduces-legislation-to-expand-dental-care-for-veterans-2/>
- <https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/va-launches-plan-expand-dental-care-access-veterans.html>