



## **ACTION ALERT**

Ask your House member and two Senators to cosponsor legislation providing coverage for wigs as durable medical equipment under the Medicare Program.

### Background

Currently, the Social Security Act determines which products are considered “durable medical equipment” for the purposes of Medicare coverage. This definition includes things like crutches and oxygen tanks as well as prosthetics. However, the definition of a “prosthetic” does not specifically include cranial prosthetics, which can lead to coverage challenges. It is important to note that private insurance and other payers often base their coverage policies and standards from Medicare.

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, Congressman James P. McGovern, Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, and Congressman Mike Quigley introduced H.R. 4034 and Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) introduced S.1922 in that would provide coverage for wigs as durable medical equipment under the Medicare Program. Many patients living with medical hair loss suffer from a variety of diseases, including cancer. With no known cause or cure, alopecia areata is an autoimmune skin disease affecting 7 million Americans, many of whom are children.

### Important Points

- Many individuals affected by alopecia areata utilize cranial prosthetics as there are currently few other effective treatment options.
- Cranial prosthetics can represent a significant out-of-pocket burden for low- or fixed-income Americans, particularly individuals in Medicare.
- This new benefit is not a give-away, but only becomes available when a physician certifies such a treatment to be medically necessary.

### **Take Action:**

- Complete the advocacy letter below. We will only deliver these letters to your members of Congress and will not share your information with any other party. Do not mail advocacy letters to your member of Congress. Scan and email your advocacy letter to Matt Duquette ([duquette@hmcw.org](mailto:duquette@hmcw.org)) who works with our DC rep Phil Goglas, and it will be delivered to Capitol Hill. Please do not include this side of the document with your completed advocacy letter.

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am one of your constituents from \_\_\_\_\_.

I am an advocate for the National Alopecia Areata Foundation (NAAF). NAAF supports research to find a cure or acceptable therapy for alopecia areata, supports those with the disease, and educates the public about alopecia areata.

Alopecia areata is an autoimmune skin disease resulting in the loss of hair on the scalp and elsewhere on the body. It usually starts with one or more small, round, smooth patches on the head and can progress to total scalp hair loss (alopecia totalis) or complete body hair loss (alopecia universalis). Alopecia areata tends to strike children and 6.9 million Americans have been, are, or will be affected by the condition. This common skin disease is highly unpredictable and cyclical. Hair can grow back in or fall out again at any time, and the disease course is different for each person.

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Many individuals affected by alopecia areata utilize cranial prosthetics (or wigs) as there are currently few effective treatment options. Unfortunately, these prosthetics can come with a significant out-of-pocket cost for Americans with low or fixed incomes. This is especially burdensome for children, who often require cranial prosthetics for attending school.

**Please cosponsor [H.R. 4034/S. 1922](#) to provide coverage for wigs as durable medical equipment under the Medicare Program.** This legislation makes a simple change to the Social Security Act to ensure that cranial prosthetics are considered durable medical equipment for treatment purposes moving forward. To cosponsor this critical piece of legislation please contact Bella Edo ([isabella.edo@mail.house.gov](mailto:isabella.edo@mail.house.gov)) in Congressman McGovern’s office (5-6101) or Kasandra Navarro ([kasandra\\_navarro@blumenthal.senate.gov](mailto:kasandra_navarro@blumenthal.senate.gov)) in Senator Blumenthal’s office (4-2823).

Sincerely,

Name  
Address