

# SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS

*United States Senator for Vermont*



## **The Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act of 2021 Organizational Statements of Support**

“Dental hygiene is critical to enhancing veteran quality of life and preventing the development of future diseases. However, at VA, unlike other health care benefits, dental care is limited to only certain veterans leaving a majority of veterans unable to afford the high cost associated with private dental care. The Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act will ensure veterans receive timely access to quality dental care by providing outpatient dental care to veterans. The last thing a veteran should have to worry about when returning home from service is whether or not they have access to the health care they have rightfully earned.” – **Paul E. Dillard, National Commander of The American Legion**

“DAV strongly supports the Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act to expand VA dental health coverage to all enrolled veterans. Dental care is an integral part of comprehensive health care and we applaud Senator Sanders for his steadfast efforts to strengthen VA health care for the men and women who served.” – **Joy Ilem, DAV National Legislative Director**

“Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) recognizes that far too many veterans lack access to proper dental care. Poor oral hygiene can lead to serious health outcomes, which is why PVA supports Senator Sanders' bill, the ‘Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act,’ which would improve and expand access to dental care for veterans.” – **Heather Ansley, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations at Paralyzed Veterans of America**

“MOAA is supportive of the Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act and Senator Bernie Sanders’ efforts to include dental care in VA’s whole health approach to veterans’ health care. Veterans enrolled in VHA are a particularly vulnerable population. According to VA, nearly 1 in 5 veterans between the ages of 45 and 54 reported at least two chronic conditions. MOAA and the United Health Foundation partnered on a 2020 survey called the [Health of Those Who Served Report](#) that found more than 27% of those who have served reported suffering from chronic pain, compared with more than 19% of those who have not. Those who served also saw higher rates of arthritis, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. MOAA believes VA’s experience in delivering whole health care including dental care will result in significant long-term cost savings and improve health care outcomes for all veterans—a model we urge Congress to support.” – **Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), MOAA President and CEO**

“Health care is incomplete without dental care. Other medical specialties are needed by only some Veterans, but dental care is needed by all. Because poor dental care is related to many other diseases, what is spent on dental care would be offset by what would not have to be spent on

treatment for them, not to mention the suffering that would be alleviated. It's a matter of the ounce of prevention versus the pound of cure. Besides, those who have sacrificed for our freedom deserve it. Congress gets dental care, so why not Veterans?" – **Larry Nazimek, Coalition of Veteran Organizations President**

"The dental health of veterans has been neglected, yet oral health is a critical aspect of overall health. Untreated dental decay and tooth loss not only leads to pain and difficulty eating, but also the worsening of chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension. The Dental Care for Veterans Act is an important step towards providing needed oral health benefits and improving oral health equity for low-income older adults, and Justice in Aging is proud to support this legislation." – **Jennifer Goldberg, Deputy Director at Justice in Aging**

"Over the years, research has shown close ties between dental health and general health. Therefore, it just makes sense to ensure that our veteran population has dental care covered by the VA. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it could save the VA costs associated with caring for more serious disease down the road. We fully support Senator Sanders in his effort to expand dental coverage for veterans, and thank him for his longstanding commitment to ensuring veterans care is as strong as possible." – **Mary Kaszynski, Director of Government Relations, VoteVets**