



251 18th Street South
Suite 630
Arlington, VA 22202
800-231-4222: tel
www.bonehealthandosteoporosis.org

The new name of the National Osteoporosis Foundation

March 17, 2022

Douglas Emhoff
Second Gentleman of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Emhoff,

Approximately **10 million Americans** currently suffer from osteoporosis (bone disease) and another **44 million** have low bone mass, putting them at increased risk of osteoporotic fractures. Women are impacted more than men due to loss of estrogen at menopause, but every gender, race, and socioeconomic group is susceptible to this debilitating bone disease. At the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation, we are desperately trying to raise awareness about how to prevent fractures.

May 2022 is National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month. We are hoping you will do a tremendous public service and greatly help our efforts to educate Americans about their bone health simply by getting a bone density test (DXA) and/or speaking about this as a part of your preventive health regimen. As Second Gentleman, you have the power to influence millions of Americans who may not be aware of just how important bone health and osteoporosis screening are to living an independent and active lifestyle as we age.

In a recent study we commissioned it was revealed that up to 2.3 million osteoporotic bone fractures were suffered by approximately 2 million Medicare beneficiaries in 2016. ***That is more than the number of heart attacks, strokes, or new cancer cases.*** The total annual cost for osteoporotic fractures among Medicare beneficiaries was \$57 billion in 2018 and is expected to grow to over \$95 billion in 2040, as the population ages. If we are able to reduce just 20 percent of secondary (repeat) fractures, it would save Medicare up to \$1.1 billion dollars in addition to preventing the human toll of these fractures.

The good news is that we know how to prevent these fractures. Medicare pays for high-quality bone density testing to identify those who are at risk of bone fractures, allowing for early and effective preventive steps and interventions. However, only 8 percent of those who suffer fractures are screened within 6 months and for Black Americans that screening rate is just 4 percent. Medicare also pays for FDA-approved drug treatments for osteoporosis that can help reduce spine and hip fractures by up to 70% and cut subsequent fractures by about half. But about 80% go untreated, even after a fracture.

Thank you for considering our request and we stand ready to answer any questions you may have. We know that with your support we can highlight this growing health crisis and help to prevent costly fractures. Please feel free to have your staff contact me at any time. I can be reached at (703) 647-3025 or cgill@bonehealthandosteoporosis.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Claire Gill".

Claire Gill
CEO
Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation