



Addressing Bone Health Across the Life Course for Dually Eligible Women with Disabilities



Roughly 44 percent of women aged 65 and older have a disability.¹ As women with disabilities age, their need for more intensive health screening protocols increases. However, although women with disabilities are often at a higher risk for osteoporosis due to medication use and limited weightbearing activity, they experience lower bone health screening rates.² One seminal study of women with a range of disabilities found that three quarters of those in the sample reported never having been screened or tested for bone mineral density (BMD), yet over half had osteopenia or osteoporosis.³ Lack of screening and treatment for low BMD can lead to higher risk of osteoporosis and related fractures. Compounding this increased risk is some evidence that disabilities such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia may also increase skeletal fragility.⁴

This resource guide offers guidance for providers, care managers, care coordinators, and other clinical staff working with health plans and health care organizations. It shares resources and advice to help professionals better meet the bone health needs of women with disabilities who are dually eligible for

¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, & Division of Human Development and Disability. (2020). Disability & Health Information for Women with Disabilities. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/women.html>.

² Piotrowski, K., & Snell, L. (2007). Health Needs of Women With Disabilities Across the Lifespan. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*, 36(1), 79-87. Retrieved from [https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175\(15\)33660-1/pdf](https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175(15)33660-1/pdf).

³ Smeltzer, S. C., Zimmerman, V., & Capriotti, T. (2005). Osteoporosis risk and low bone mineral density in women with physical disabilities. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 86(3), 582-586. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0003999304012377>.

⁴ Llabre, J. E., Gil, C., Amatya, N., Lagalwar, S., Possidente B., & Vashishth, D. (2022). Degradation of Bone Quality in a Transgenic Mouse Model of Alzheimer's Disease. *Journal of bone and mineral research: the official journal of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research*, 37(12), 2548-2565. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/jbmr.4723>.

Addressing Bone Health Across the Life Course for Women with Disabilities

Medicare and Medicaid. In addition, it supplements content presented in the Resources for Integrated Care (RIC) webinar, "[Addressing Menopause and Health Across the Life Course for Dually Eligible Women with Disability](#)," as well as additional resources RIC previously developed to help support the advancement of disability-competent care. Note that some resources below do not explicitly reference dually eligible women with disabilities, but remain on the list because they address issues of health care access and disease prevalence that are relevant to women with disabilities as a population.

This resource includes a broad range of materials below, including toolkits and guides, webinars and educational videos, reports, and journal articles on the preventive health care needs of women with disabilities.

TOOLKITS AND GUIDES

[Radically Simple Tool — Bone Source® for Clinicians](#)

The *Osteoporosis and Fracture Risk Evaluation Tool (Radically Simple Tool)* was developed by the International Osteoporosis Foundation and the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation (BHOFF) to help providers communicate with their patients how osteoporosis increases the risk of bone fracture, as well as the importance of maintaining bone health. The goal of the tool is to help patients maintain adherence to bone health treatment strategies and understand considerations associated with commencing anti-osteoporosis medication.

[A Provider's Guide for the Care of Women with Physical Disabilities and Chronic Health Conditions](#)

The North Carolina Office on Disability and Health, in collaboration with Villanova University College of Nursing, produced this guide to support clinicians caring for women with physical disabilities and chronic health conditions. It outlines strategies to improve access to care and provides specialized approaches to topics such as aging, health promotion, and osteoporosis, and includes recommendations for BMD screening.

[Your Path to Good Bone Health](#)

This roadmap from the BHOFF is for patients and caregivers across the life course. Three distinct paths welcome both individuals and caregivers to explore risk factors, osteoporosis diagnosis, or continued osteoporosis management. The tool is easy to understand and navigate and provides users with practical information about nutrition, exercise, screening, diagnosis, medications, treatment, falls prevention, and tips for communicating with health care providers.

RIC Webinar Resource Guide: [Supporting the Preventive Health Care Needs of Dually Eligible Women with Disability](#)

This RIC-produced guide is a supplement to the RIC webinar, "[Supporting the Preventive Health Care Needs of Dually Eligible Women with Disability](#)." It includes relevant information hubs, toolkits and guides, webinars and educational videos, fact and data sheets, journal articles on preventive health care needs of women with disability, and resources related to the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) and women with disabilities.

WEBINARS AND VIDEOS

[Addressing Menopause and Health Across the Life Course for Dually Eligible Women with Disability](#)

This RIC-produced webinar explores innovative solutions and best practices for disability-competent care for dually eligible women at midlife and beyond. It addresses menopause and associated conditions and focuses on accessibility, provider awareness and education, health promotion, and strategies for consumers and providers to coordinate health care services and supports for dually eligible women across the life course.

[Supporting the Preventive Health Care Needs of Dually Eligible Women with Disability](#)

This RIC-produced webinar explores the challenges and barriers that women with disabilities face in accessing screenings and health services, particularly during the COVID-19 PHE. It also highlights promising practices providers and health plans can employ to achieve better integrated person-centered care.

REPORTS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES

[Recommendations for Improving Women's Bone Health Throughout the Lifespan](#)

The Society for Women's Health Research's Working Group on Bone Health reviewed the state of science and practice concerning women's bone health and osteoporosis care and developed this report in 2022. It includes strategies to address gaps in screening, diagnosis, and treatment of bone disease in women. The report also summarizes the group's consensus recommendations around four priority areas: (1) promoting early education and a bone-healthy lifestyle, (2) increasing access and coverage for dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry testing, (3) broadening and improving patient-provider conversations, and (4) expanding the risk stratification approach to osteoporosis care.

[Aging and Bone Health in Individuals with Developmental Disabilities](#)

Authors Joan Jasien, Caitlin M. Daimon, Stuart Maudsley, Bruce K. Shapiro, and Bronwen Martin published this comprehensive overview of bone health in adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The paper discusses the relationship between I/DD and the risk of bone fractures, noting differences between aging adults both with and without I/DD. Specifically, the researchers explore how two common developmental disabilities, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy, affect bone health, density, and fracture rates.

[Using Population-Based Data to Examine Preventive Services by Disability Type Among Dually Eligible \(Medicare/Medicaid\) Adults](#)

Amanda Reichard, Ph.D., and Michael H. Fox, Sc.D., share findings of their study, which explores preventive service use among the dually eligible population. The researchers investigated associations between sociodemographic factors, including disability type, and preventive care services to measure how cognitive limitations and physical disabilities impact preventive care. While not specifically

Addressing Bone Health Across the Life Course for Women with Disabilities

targeting bone health screening and testing, this study explores health care access challenges faced by women with physical disabilities, including dually eligible adults.

[Barriers in Access to Healthcare for Women with Disabilities: A Systematic Review in Qualitative Studies](#)

This systematic review, conducted in 2021 by Behzad K. Matin, Heather J. Williamson, Ali K. Karyani, Satar Rezaei, Moslem Soofi, and Shahin Soltani, considers access barriers affecting women with disabilities internationally. The authors examined 24 articles and found that women with disabilities face sociocultural, financial, structural, and attitudinal barriers that limit access to health care, including access to preventative health services.

Special thanks for contributions to this guide:

Claire Gill
*Chief Executive Officer,
Bone Health and
Osteoporosis Foundation*

Lindsey West, MPH
*Chief Program Officer,
Bone Health and Osteoporosis
Foundation*

**Dr. Suzanne Smeltzer, EdD, RN,
ANEF, FAAN**
*Professor Emerita and Research
Professor,
Villanova University*

The Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO) in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) seeks to help beneficiaries dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid have access to seamless, high-quality health care that includes the full range of covered services in both programs. This resource guide is intended to support health plans and providers in integrating and coordinating care for dually eligible beneficiaries. It does not convey current or anticipated health plan or provider requirements. For additional information, please go to www.resourcesforintegratedcare.com. The list of resources in this guide is not exhaustive. Please submit feedback to RIC@lewin.com.