This week, Congressman Blumenauer held a round table meeting with audiologists, optometrists, and dentists to discuss the importance of screening children for hearing, vision, and dental problems at a young age. Screenings are now widely available (such as hearing screenings in newborn babies), but the doctors expressed concern that majors barriers remain to using the results from these screenings and treating the discovered medical issues. For too many families, following up on screenings with therapies or getting corrective devices for their children is prohibitively expensive. Lack of follow up treatment however, can lead to increased disabilities and costs for those affected later in life.

“Vision, hearing, and dental care often take a backseat in health care discussions, but a critical lack of access to these services is a symptom of our broken system,” Blumenauer said. He is a sponsor of Breaking Barriers to Oral Health Act that increases access to dental treatment in underserved communities, but wants to use the feedback from medical professionals to develop a greater framework to tackle these problems.