

To: Senate Health Care Committee
From: Oregon Dental Association
Re: House Bill 2021



March 16, 2015

Good Afternoon Chair Greenlick and members of the committee. My name is Frances Sunseri and I am a general dentist from Happy Valley. Thank you for allowing me to speak today in support of House Bill 2021 on behalf of the Oregon Dental Association.

It is a sad reality that only 22% of our state is currently served by community water fluoridation. This means the majority of Oregonians are not receiving the benefits of fluoride, an important oral health prevention measure.

Dental health is ultimately linked to overall health. Yet dental decay remains a significant public health problem among Oregon's children. Tooth decay is the number one chronic disease in childhood and is a leading cause of school absenteeism. Pain and suffering due to untreated disease leads to problems with eating, speaking and diminishes a child's ability to focus on learning.

Frequent exposure to small amounts of fluoride each day, which only water fluoridation achieves, will best reduce the risk for dental caries in all age groups in the most equitable and cost-effective way. However, until we can bring the benefits of water fluoridation to everyone in Oregon, we must look at other ways to help our children remain on a path of oral health. Fluoride varnish helps to achieve to achieve this goal. Clinical studies indicate that the application of varnish has been found to be beneficial for those with no access to daily fluoride or other preventive methods.

All dental disease is preventable so any steps we can take to increase the oral health literacy of our children, should be taken.

Thank you for your time, I'm happy to answer any questions.