

Joint Interim Committee on the Third Special Session of 2020
Dr. Barry Taylor
Oregon Dental Association

Good morning Co-Chair's Courtney and Kotek,

For the record, my name is Barry Taylor. I'm the Executive Director of the Oregon Dental Association, as well as licensed dentist here in Oregon. Our association represents over 2500 dentists and dental students across the state through education, advocacy and promotion of the highest professional dental standards.

The Oregon Dental Association urges the Joint Interim Committee on the Third Special Session to **support passage of LC 29** via an amendment to LC 21 – which includes dental providers in the list of health care workers and facilities receiving liability protection.

Early in the pandemic, Oregon's dental community closed their dental practices to non-emergency care, and at the request of Governor Brown, began donating their personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline workers. Since then, Oregon dental offices donated over 125,000 surgical masks, 75,000 N95's and countless boxes of gloves to support our medical colleagues.

Closure of dental offices and the delay of non-emergency medical and dental procedures meant that many Oregon delayed care – including for painful symptoms and conditions. Some dental offices were able to see the most emergent of patients – a critical tool to keep these same people from presenting at crowded emergency rooms. Today, dental offices are at about 85% capacity for both emergency and elective procedures. These offices are committed to keeping patients and staff safe and ODA regularly updates offices on the latest guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control, the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon's OSHA requirements. Offices are checking patient temperatures, practicing social distancing and thoroughly disinfecting chairs between visits.

Unfortunately, the more we learn about the virus, regulations continue to change, and as health care provides, we understand the challenges that regulators face as they try to quickly adopt policies that are aimed at keeping people safe. But we went from reopening dental offices on May 1st with specific guidelines to ongoing continuing changes to mask requirements, sanitation requirements, room requirements, etc. Most recently, ODA was just informed the KN95 masks they received from FEMA, and approved by the CDC, were no longer allowed under current Oregon OSHA guidelines.

ODA and our members care very deeply about the oral health of Oregonians. But we also hear from our members they are very concerned about the changing expectations of dental offices. These changes bring a worry about potential lawsuits and unanticipated litigation. It's why we **support passage of LC 29** and inclusion of dental providers as receiving limited liability protection.

Thank you.