



House Health Care Committee

May 21, 2019

Good afternoon Chair Salinas and Members of the Committee,

I am James McMahan, a dentist from La Grande, and President of the Oregon Dental Association. Thank you for hearing our bill today.

We are here to talk about the way dental students are tested for licensure, and how we can help that test evolve into a more ethical and practical form of competency-based testing.

Today, when a dental student is ready to be tested for licensure, they don't just schedule a test date. They also have to find and secure a patient presenting with a particular set of clinical parameters, delay treatment of that individual until exam date, and ensure that the patient shows up-- often with financial incentives and arranging transportation from great distances. You heard that right. Students often have to pay patients to show up for the exam. Care is delayed until that exam date, and there is not necessarily any follow up for those patients.

The student makes all of these, often costly preparations, while hoping that no other external factors, like a 2015 example of Ecoli in the community water, suddenly prevent the test from occurring.

While most professional students have stress preparing for their licensure exam, dentistry is the only profession left that still tests on human subjects and the test is in no way standardized.

There is movement across the country away from the usage of live patient exams and instead relying on a student's performance during their dental school time, testing judgment rather than hand skills, and ensuring that every dental student is tested in a similar, structured way to assess their overall competency to practice.

SB 824 makes a small change to statute which will allow the Oregon Board of Dentistry to accept alternative examinations as another form of minimum requirement for dental licensure. SB 824 maintains the Board's authority over which specific tests are accepted for licensure.

Thank you for your time.