



February 3, 2020

Chair Doherty, Vice-Chair Helt, Vice-Chair Alonso Leon, and Members of the House Education Committee,

Children First works with our 120 partner organizations to develop the Children's Agenda. We identify and elevate legislative concepts that will support the needs of Oregon's children - our children - so that all of our children have opportunities to reach their full potential.

Through policies like Cover All Kids, Oregon has made progress to get more kids health care. But we still have work to do, which is why **HB 4127 to support school-based dental health programs is part of the 2020 Children's Agenda.**

There are still real barriers keeping families from getting the preventive dental care that kids need to be healthy and do well in school. And low-income children, kids of color, and children from rural communities are impacted the most by gaps in access to dental care.

- 68 percent of children living in lower income communities have tooth decay compared with 44 percent of those in higher-income areas
- Dental health disparities exist for many children in Oregon, and children of color are at higher risk for cavities.
- Oregon children in grades 1-3 in rural areas are 11 percent more likely to have cavities than children in urban areas.

Transportation and the ability to take time off work is a major obstacle for low-income families in rural areas who need to take their kids to the dentist.

Kids need preventive dental care. It's an essential part of growing up healthy.

Our Children Oregon

Bringing Together Children First for Oregon and the Children's Trust Fund of Oregon

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House Bill 4127 is a bipartisan solution that moves us in the right direction:

- Directs Department of Education, in consultation with Oregon Health Authority (OHA), to develop oral health curriculum standards for K-12 students when DOE next updates its health curriculum standards, expected in 2024.
- Directs OHA to seek federal grant funding to support care coordination for school-based dental programs, with a focus on reaching kids who experience health disparities.
- Ensures that CCOs and public health agencies can continue to support coordination of school-based dental health programs so that children participate and receive appropriate follow-up care.

We ask for your support for HB 4127.

Sincerely,

Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director

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