



Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, Inc.
A Non-Profit Organization

February 3, 2019

Chair Monnes Anderson
900 Court St. NE S-211
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the Senate Health Care Committee,

The Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest an Urban Indian Health Program strongly supports Senate Bill 1549. We are writing to you today to ask that you stand with us in fully recognizing our rights and responsibilities to care for our members with high quality and culturally relevant oral health services by supporting Senate Bill 1549, authorizing dental therapists as licensed providers in Oregon.

There is an oral health crisis in Oregon, and it doesn't have to be this way. Dental therapy is an evidenced-based, culturally-relevant oral health care model brought to the United States 15 years ago by Alaska Natives seeking to reverse their oral disease epidemic. Practiced in over 50 countries, the profession continues to demonstrate its safety and effectiveness by:

- improving the patient experience of care;
- increasing and improving access and outcomes;
- building an oral health workforce with providers recruited from and returning to their communities and;
- reducing the cost of care.

We are collaborating with healthcare providers, oral health professional associations, community-based organizations and oral health educators across the state to support a policy that is informed by other state and Tribal efforts that precede this bill. To that end we are committed to policy that ensures the following outcomes:

- Use of Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) standards as the measure of qualified dental therapy education programs. This allows for accessible education pathways for non-traditional students from underrepresented communities;
- Recognition of Tribal Sovereignty;
- General supervision for the full scope of dental therapy to achieve maximum benefits to patients, clinics and providers, and;
- A pathway to licensure for Oregon Pilot Project dental therapists that does not interrupt services currently being provided.

Oyate Administration

1776 SW Madison St.
Portland, OR 97205
[p] 503-224-1044
[f] 503-274-4251

Residential Treatment Services

17645 NW St. Helens Hwy.
Portland, OR 97231
[p] 503-621-1069
[f] 503-621-0200

Outpatient Treatment Services

1631 SW Columbia St.
Portland, OR 97201
[p] 503-231-2641
[f] 503-231-1654

Tate' Topo

1310 SW 17th Ave.
Portland, OR 97201
[p] 503-231-2641
[f] 503-467-4077

Totem Lodge

1438 SE Division
Portland, OR 97202
[p] 503-548-0346
[f] 503-232-5959

Dental Clinic

12750 SE Stark St., Building E
Portland, OR 97233
[p] 971-347-3009
[f] 971-256-3277

Indian Health Clinic

15 N Morris St.
Portland, OR 97227
[p] 503-230-9875
[f] 503-230-9877

Wellness Center

12360 E. Burnside St. 2nd Floor
Portland, OR 97233
[p] 971-279-4800
[f] 971-279-2051

**Child, Youth & Family Programs and
Youth Residential Treatment Center**

620 NE 2nd Street
Gresham, OR 97030
[p] 971-274-3757
[f] 503-921-5740

In Oregon, the Tribal Dental Health Aide Therapy Pilot Project, approved by the state in 2016, is showing that dental therapy meets the goals of Senate Bill 738: to develop innovative practices in oral health care delivery systems with a focus on providing care to populations that evidence-based studies have shown have the highest disease rates and the least access to dental care.

And this pilot only adds support to what we already know. Recognizing overwhelming oral health disparities, the need for systems change and the evidence-based outcomes of dental therapy, eleven states have now authorized dental therapy in some or all settings to help meet the needs of those that cannot access care. Oregon should be next.

This legislation does not require any health care systems to adopt dental therapists but merely clears the way for tribes and other underserved and underrepresented communities to choose to incorporate this provider into their oral health teams. There is much work to be done to turn the tide on oral health care disparities in Oregon, and SB 1549 is one solution we urge you to support.

Thank you for your strong consideration of this endorsement.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacqueline Mercer".

Jacqueline Mercer
Chief Executive Officer