

HB 2528 -3 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Health Care

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Meeting Dates: 3/4, 3/18, 3/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Board of Dentistry (Board) to issue dental therapist license to qualified applicant. Specifies examination requirements to dental therapy license applicants. Prohibits unlicensed use of title “dental therapist” and practice of dental therapy and specifies exceptions. Allows Board to charge fees related to dental therapist licensure. Specifies elements of required practice agreement between dental therapist and supervising dentist. Specifies dental therapist scope of practice. Authorizes dental therapists to dispense and orally administer specified drugs. Adds dental therapist member to Board. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History of dental therapy in Oregon and other states
- Dental therapist role in serving needs of tribal communities
- Dental access inequities in Oregon
- Dental therapist education and scope of practice; comparison to standards for other dental practitioner types

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-3 Replaces measure. Removes qualification for dental therapy licensure based on completion of education program that is substantially equivalent to other approved programs. Prohibits dental therapy examinations from being affiliated with, or administered by, a dental pilot project or dental therapy education program. Allows dental hygienists to qualify for dental therapist licensure beginning January 1, 2027. Requires dental therapists to have collaborative agreement with supervising dentist that outlines the supervision logistics and requirements for the dental therapist's practice. Specifies information required to be in collaborative agreement. Specifies that if a dental therapist is supervised by more than one dentist each collaborative agreement must include the same supervision requirements and scope of practice. Allows dentists to supervise up to two dental therapists at a time. Clarifies dental therapist scope of practice, including procedures requiring direct or indirect supervision by dentist. Allows dental therapist to supervise up to two dental assistants or expanded function dental assistants. Requires dental therapists to purchase and maintain liability insurance. Requires dental therapists to dedicate at least 51 percent of practice to patients who represent underserved populations. Removes dental therapist representative from Oregon Board of Dentistry. Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

BACKGROUND:

Senate Bill 738 (2011) authorized the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to approve pilot projects encouraging the development of innovative practices in oral health delivery focusing on populations that have the highest disease rates and least access to dental care. In February 2016, OHA approved Pilot Project #100 ("Oregon Tribes Dental Health Aide Therapist Pilot Project") to develop a new category of dental personnel in Oregon and teach new oral health care roles to previously untrained individuals. The Pilot Project authorized the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board to utilize the Alaska Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT) program that has been providing services in Alaska for 11 years. The Alaska DHAT program is modeled off the international model of dental nurses that have been providing oral health services in nearly 100 countries around the world.

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Several states have passed legislation authorizing the practice of dental therapy, including Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, Minnesota, Michigan, New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada. In August 2020, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredited Ilisagvik College in Alaska to become the first dental therapy training program in the United States.

House Bill 2528 creates dental therapy licensure in Oregon through the Oregon Board of Dentistry.