

March 2, 2021
House Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon, 97301

Subject: Significant Concern with HB 2528

Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas,

As a Pediatric Dentist in Portland, Oregon myself and my associate dentists here at World of Smiles Pediatric Dentistry treat hundreds of Medicaid/Oregon Health Plan patients every month. We are committed to the health and safety and care of our patient families.

Today I write with significant concerns on the Dental Therapy bill, HB 2528.

- Performing irreversible dental procedures on patients requires years of school AND should remain that way. Without the proper training, a Dental Therapist could cause great harm to their patients without malintent but because of the lack of training.
 - For instance, Dental Therapists should NOT be allowed to extract primary teeth without an evaluation from a dentist. Some people are born without a permanent tooth below a primary tooth and if the baby tooth is extracted that person will always have a significant hole in their smile.
 - Another example: it is not uncommon for an x-ray to make a tooth look like it needs a simple filling. However, upon preparation of that tooth cavity for a filling the cavity is actually deep and requires a root canal instead. Then what would a therapist do?
 - Furthermore, we are VERY detail-oriented at World of Smiles and therefore, even if we hire a hygienist who is licensed by the board of dentistry to perform restorations, we always work with them and check their work to make sure they are providing quality care. I have experienced firsthand that even Board Licensed hygienists (or even dentists) do not always perform the best restorations in practice. Who would be over-seeing, training and checking these therapists who are even less qualified than the hygienists?
 - I worked as a dentist in rural California about 18 years ago when they briefly allowed foreign trained dentists to skip the testing and gain a license as long as they practiced in rural California. During those years I saw HORRENDOUS dentistry that was performed by licensed dentists. These individuals had college and dental degrees from foreign countries and yet they did not meet the standard of care in the U.S. How can we then consider giving a license to practice irreversible procedures to anyone after only a fraction of the education they actually need to practice dentistry in a manner that meets or exceeds the Standard of Care. Let us not make this same mistake in Oregon. Let us protect our families here!
- I implore you, do NOT pass this bill. To do so would be to directly put people in harms way of receiving substandard and irreversible dental procedures.

Sincerely,
Dr. Michelle E Stafford, DDS
CEO, World of Smiles Pediatric Dentistry, LLC
Portland Oregon