

March 4th, 2021

Re: Supporting HB 2528

Chair Prusak, Vice Chair Hayden, Vice Chair Salinas, and Members of the Committee,

I urge you to support HB 2528. My children have been seeing a dental therapist since 2017. We previously saw a dentist outside of the tribal clinic, where my oldest child was fearful of receiving dental care. My child would often try to get out of those appointments. Going to the CTCLUSI dental clinic, my children have become excited and invested in their oral health. My oldest suffered from poor oral health and had cavities in her baby teeth. My oldest child does have anxiety, and would get a lot of anxiety and concerns about receiving dental care prior to us receiving care at our tribal clinic. After seeing a dental therapist, she became excited to get fillings in her baby teeth. She is now cavity free in her adult teeth. My youngest has never had a cavity and is starting to get his adult teeth. He was super excited to get sealants by our dental therapist at the age of 3. The sealant appointment was super easy for him and went great! They often will talk about doing a good job at cleaning their teeth because they want to show their dental therapist how great they are doing. My children are very active in the tribe and feel a strong connection with their dental therapist that is also from the tribe. I hope that other tribal communities get this opportunity to have such an impactful program within their community to improve the overall health of tribal members. Every tribe should be given the opportunity to employ a dental therapist.