

May 10, 2021

Senate Committee on Health Care

900 Court Street NE

Salem, Oregon 97301

Subject: Written Testimony Regarding HB 2528A

Dear Members of the Senate Health Care Committee,

My name is Alayna Schoblaske. I practice as a general dentist practicing at a Federally Qualified Health Center in Medford, Oregon. Over half of our clinic's patients rely on the Oregon Health Plan (an additional quarter are uninsured), over three-quarters live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and nearly one-third identify as Latino/a/x. I care deeply about my patients, and believe that each person I serve is precious, deserving dignity and excellence.

It is from that place that I am writing to express my thoughts on House Bill 2528A. I think it is important that we approach our introduction of Dental Therapists in Oregon thoughtfully to maintain the dignity and excellence that my patients deserve.

I am primarily concerned about the educational requirements outlined in the bill.

The House Health Care Committee amended the bill to require that Dental Therapists be trained in a Commission on Dental Accreditation-approved program and align with the scope of practice that this training prepares them for. All other dental providers in Oregon – dentists and dental hygienists – are required to complete a CODA-accredited program, and it is important for Dental Therapists to be held to the same standard. CODA accreditation is an extensive process; I was a dental student during OHSU's last round of accreditation and saw first-hand the attention to detail and dedicated preparation that was required for re-accreditation. The extensive nature of the process, though, ensures that graduates from *all* accredited programs are adequately prepared to provide the standard of care for their patients upon graduation. This preparation is owed to patients being treated by Dental Therapists, too, and I urge you to keep this provision in the bill.

I hope that the Health Care Committee and Congress will continue to work together with underserved communities, with dental professionals, and with community health centers to ensure that our version of dental therapy prioritizes patient safety, and truly solves Oregon's unique dental access issues.

Sincerely,

Alayna Schoblaske, DMD
Medford, Oregon