

Opposition to House Bill 2979, Section 9

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care.

My name is Jill Lomax and I am the Dental Assisting Program Chair at Chemeketa Community College in Salem. I am writing to express concern regarding section 9 of HB 2979 in it's current language.

As a dental assistant, I know first-hand on the challenges that the workforce shortage poses on our dental community. Many of the dental assisting programs have responded to this need by increasing their class size and offering curriculum through non-traditional methods.

Understandably, the Oregon Dental Association (ODA) is trying to support dentists and dental professions across the state by increasing the workforce. However, I ask that you consider these points:

- There are already dental assisting training modules available at a very reasonable price through The DALE Foundation that support on the job training and are updated regularly by subject matter experts
- There is already a non-credit Community College Dental Assisting program that can be completed in either a hybrid or remote model accessible to rural areas of Oregon. This program is already being utilized by Kaiser Permanente and others to train on the job.

Since training modules and remote programs are already available, I ask that you amend House Bill 2979, Section 9.

The \$2 million dollar funds are better spent elsewhere.

In the spirit of collaboration, I believe a better solution to the workforce shortage would be by the ODA, the Oregon Community College Dental Assisting Programs, and the Oregon Dental Assisting Association working together to develop dental assisting career opportunity information to educate others on the pathways and resources to become a professional dental assistant in Oregon and recruitment tools that would encourage interest in the profession.

As the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute pointed out, shoring up the workforce pipeline will require long term changes.

Let's work on this together and transparently.

Respectfully,

Jill Lomax, EdM, CDA, EFDA-RF
Chemeketa Community College
Dental Assisting Program Chair