

Testimony in opposition of:

House Bill 3223: Prohibits Oregon Board of Dentistry from requiring applicant for certification as dental assistant to pass written examination. Requires board to adopt rules to establish alternative pathways to certification.

Dear Representative Nosse and members of the Behavior Health and Healthcare Committee

HB 3223 has been introduced when Oregon Dental Assistants are not licensed but are required to obtain certificates by the Oregon Board of Dentistry (OBD) Division 42 in the Dental Practice Act. All changes that have occurred to dental assistant rules have been accomplished through committee work at the OBD level as I have been served on committees and worked with board members to make changes and provisions. HB 3223 does not allow this collaboration.

I have been a dental assistant in the state of Oregon for 50 years. I was given the opportunity to be trained on-the-job (OJT) because the Oregon Board of Dentistry provided a pathway for OJT's that included approved education and required examination. Like me, a large percentage of the current dental assistants in the state of Oregon had the same opportunity. Because of this my position as an OJT dental assistant became more than just a "job". I felt pride and accomplishment that led me to other career opportunities.

Within the Oregon Board of Dentistry, Dental Practice Act Division 42 Rules for Dental Assistants, the pathways for dental assistants to be trained on-the-job through the support of the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) and The DALE Foundation can be found. Dentists can train their own dental assistants by following these pathways. High quality education modules and examinations have been developed by subject matter experts (SME's) and are reviewed, updated and maintained on a regular basis.

HB 3223 will not solve the dental assistant shortage but only increase the problem. Current dental assistants will leave a field that is not acknowledged or respected by the dentists who we are trained to support and the patients we care for.

Ultimately it will be Oregon dental patients who will be hurt from this bill. Dental assistants are responsible for many duties in a dental practice that include infection control, exposing radiographs, instrument processing, sterilization, and direct patient care procedures. Eliminating the current requirements is a mistake and will put dental patients at a risk.

As a career dental assistant, training specialist and educator I urge you to oppose HB 3223.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Jorgensen, CDA, EFDA, EFODA