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On Behalf Of: Concerned Healthcare Providers of Oregon  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure: HB3223

This is the second piece of a previously submitted testimony. That offers the second piece of why there is a shortage of dental assistants.

Secondly, for those who enter the dental assisting profession, like anyone would, they want to feel their value to the dental practice and be respected by the dentist and their team members. Dental assisting is a challenging yet rewarding profession. However, problematic team members make being a dental assistant even more difficult. The dental practice culture plays a large role in the retention of dental assistants. If there is a team member that consistently treats a dental assistant poorly and the dentist does not step in to make this situation change, the dental assistant will leave and look elsewhere for an office that has a positive work culture, or leave the field entirely. It happens all the time.

Dental Assistants want a profession not just a job. A job can be had anywhere. A profession means there are ways to demonstrate that you are good at what you do, and can gain additional duties because of continued education. As well as being paid well and valued as an integral part of the dental team because of your skills and education.

Certifications earned do just this, they demonstrate for the holder of the certificate and to all others that this person has had advanced training and proved competence in performing skills that others have not. It brings pride to the holder and value to the dental practice.

Even more importantly these certifications demonstrate to patients that their dental care worker has proven competence to provide dental services skillfully and to do so safely.

Eliminating objective testing for certifications will remove one of the reasons good dental assistants stay in the field, recognition of their skills, all while removing the very important evidence for patients that their dental care provider is able to provide quality and safe dental care.

But don't believe it just from my extensive experience, there is detailed research from the American Dental Association that mirror these facts in the link below.

ADA Dental Workforce Shortages: Data to Navigate Today's Labor Market:  
<https://www.ada.org/resources/research/health-policy-institute/dental-practice-research/dental-workforce-shortages>