

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health & Health Care
Measure: HB 2996
Position: Support

Monday, Feb. 13th, 2023

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Goodwin, and Members of the House Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee.

My name is Dr. Brandon Schwindt, I am a pediatric dentist practicing in Tigard, OR treating children from around the state for the last 19 years. I am writing today in strong support of HB 2996.

To share a bit about my background, I have a dental degree from Oregon Health & Science University and completed my residency and fellowship in pediatric dentistry at the Medical University of South Carolina. In addition to running my own clinic, I am also the past president of the College of Diplomates of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, and former a member of the Oregon Board of Dentistry on which I served for 8 years – serving as president in 2014.

During my time with the Oregon Board of Dentistry, the discussion around dental assistant licensure and updating procedures came up frequently. One of the biggest challenges the board continues to face is the enormous workload of investigating cases. With the average case lasting 400+ days, there is just not the manpower bandwidth to tackle updating assistant licensure.

Over the last several years, I had the unique opportunity to personally help individual assistants study for and to obtain licensure. In short, I had a front-row seat to what these people go through to become certified. One of these individuals, Ms. Megan Davis, was a recently-divorced mother of two young children who decided to make a change to the dental field. She studied the books and the DANB-sponsored study guides for radiology. To my amazement, the study questions were confusing to the point of nonsensical. Mind you, I'm double board certified in Pediatric Dentistry and Pediatric Laser Surgery. I know dentistry and radiation safety. Questions like 'what is this structure' of a blurry unrecognizable object, or 'what element is inside the x-ray machine', to questions about CT scans. Less than 2% of dentists in Oregon have a CT in their office.

Most importantly, it became crystal clear that an assistant is NO more knowledgeable or safe after they take this exam than before. A vast majority of assistant applicants are young women and the failure rate is over 40%, this exam acts as an expensive barrier for vulnerable Oregonians looking to improve their employment opportunities and ultimately decreases access to care and in no way adds to quality of care for Oregonians.

These written exams do nothing but to enrich DANB, the testing organization based in Chicago, that thirteen other states have already chosen to omit. It is time for Oregon to join the other thirteen states to do the same per HB 2996.

I urge the committee's support of HB 2996.

Thank you,

Dr. Brandon Schwindt, DMD
Tigard, OR