



April 19, 2023

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

My name is Jennifer Frankel and I am a general practice dentist in Keizer. I applaud Dr. Pham and Dr. Javadi for working on the shortage of dental assistants. It is real. However, HB 2996 and its companion, HB 3223, are not the solution.

Trained dental assistants are vital to my dental clinic. Training these team members at schools, like our community colleges, or chairside in rural areas are all effective. No matter their training, we need independent verification the training they received was effective. No matter how a dental assistant is trained, they should all need to pass the same tests in order to be certified.

As the letter you received from the Oregon Health Authority states, should this bill pass, dental assistants would be the only dental provider not required to pass a test before taking x-rays. The letter goes on to state that passing these tests maintains professional standards and measures competency.

Some patients in our offices are already skeptical of x-rays despite their safety. Bills like these will make it harder to convince some patients to allow necessary x-rays and will hamper patient care.

The dental assistant shortage is real but solving it will require work on insurance reimbursement rates which is outside the scope of these bills. One of the ways we lose dental assistants is they go on to be dental hygienists which along with more pay, requires more training and more testing. Tests themselves are not the issue and throwing them out will not solve our problems.

Please vote "no" on HB 2996 and HB 3223.

Warmest Regards,

Jennifer B. Frankel, DMD