

Submitter: Christina Lapnawan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: HB3223

It is important to note the CODA curriculum already encompasses the procedures listed in subsection Bill 3223A. These procedures along with the additional clinical training requirements (which begin by use of typodonts and non-living human teeth, to live patients) and academia help equip dental assistant students for DANB exams to earn their certifications.

(The exception: no ultrasonic scaler is used for orthodontic adhesive removal [at least not at LCC] and no preliminary crown fitting is performed. Both are dependent on co-op experiences).

Moreover, implementing this bill by review of a single licensed practicing Oregon dentist according to their office practice policies does nothing to STANDARDIZE the education and clinical skill level for dental assistants across the state of Oregon. The scoring of standardized tests show uniform education and ensures every dental assistant abides by the same standard. It also allows for comparisons across the state. For example, if a dental office/CODA program is not placing enough emphasis on a particular procedure/task/a subset of dental assistant curriculum, the standardized test can reveal these discrepancies and we can make changes to this area of vulnerability to ensure that every assistant is at the same level.

However, I also feel Bill 3223A can still be of great value. Creating a similar requirement that includes a written attestation and a list of dental procedures to be completed satisfactorily for each respective specialty can help set a deeper understanding for office standards. Each specialty carries its own subset of skills: pediatric dentistry- for special needs, children, adolescents patients; periodontics- gum disease; endodontics-root canal, dental pulp specialist; prosthodontics- restoration, tooth replacement; surgical dentistry- minor/major oral surgery, oral, jaw & face disease; orthodontics- tooth and jaw misalignment; and general dentistry. CODA programs provide the basis and the exposure to each field, but a similar requirement after more clinical exposure working in the dental office (after a dental assistant graduates and hired for the job) can be paramount to a practicing licensed dentist.

For the concern to the shortage of dental assistant occupants, changing the way certifications are earned will not likely change the shortage. Washington state has less certification requirements and they struggle the same shortage.

While I believe creating a new requirement for each respective specialty can further

enhance a dental assistant's skill, I still stand by the requirement of standardized exams across the state of Oregon. It's obligatory to have the same set of standards by which all dental assistants are measured and deemed competent before working in their respective fields.

I vote 'No' to Bill 3223A