



South Lane Children's Dental Clinic

1275 S. River Rd Suite #2

Cottage Grove OR 97424

(541)942-3383

February 18th, 2025

Senate Committee on Health Care

2025 Oregon Legislative Session

I am writing on behalf of South Lane Children's Dental Clinic, which serves the South Lane, Creswell, and North Douglas School Districts. We are submitting this letter to express our unwavering support for Senate Bill 597. If passed, this legislation would significantly enhance our ability to provide the essential connection to dental care the children in our rural communities.

In 2024, our program successfully screened and provided sealant and fluoride treatments to over 3,000 children across South Lane County and North Douglas County. However, when these children are identified as needing more than preventive care, their families often struggle to find adequate dental services in our region, where access is severely limited. Many families, particularly those on the Oregon Health Plan, are overwhelmed by a complicated system that frequently leaves children with untreated dental decay and pain. As a result, many end up in our already overwhelmed emergency departments, a situation that could be avoided with proper connection to care.

The passing of Senate Bill 597 would allow our program to secure crucial funding to address these gaps in care. With this support, we would be better equipped to connect families with appropriate dental services, ultimately preventing unnecessary emergency room visits, reducing school absences, and most importantly, preventing severe dental infections that could lead to serious illness or even death if left untreated.

I strongly urge you to move Senate Bill 597 forward to the Senate with a recommendation for passage. This legislation is critical to improving the health and well-being of children in our rural communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Courtney Long E.F.D.A.

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Dental Care Coordinator

South Lane Children's Dental Clinic

Courtney.long@slane.k12.or.us