

To: House Health Care Committee

From: The Oregon Dental Association

Re: House Bill 2220: Dentists Providing Vaccines

March 12, 2019

Good afternoon Chair Salinas and members of the committee. For the record my name is Patrick Hagerty and I am here today on behalf of the Oregon Dental Association in support of House Bill 2220. I am general dentist from Albany.

House Bill 2220 would allow dentists to provide vaccinations. Dentists are an integral part of delivering primary health care services to Oregonians. As Oregon moves to a more integrated health care delivery system, utilizing dentists to screen for basic health conditions and provide preventive services such as vaccines makes increasingly more sense. As highly trained practitioners, dentists are well-positioned to administer a broad range of immunizations, from flu shots to the HPV vaccine.

Dentists will be required to take additional training courses and follow the same reporting and storage requirements to which other providers are currently held. HB 2220 will require dentists to record any vaccinations administered within the existing immunization database currently used by other healthcare professionals. The Oregon Board of Dentistry would approve an additional training course on the prescription and administration of vaccines.

The -1 Amendment is the result of collaboration with the Board of Dentistry and removes the requirement that the Board would “certify” dentists prior to dentists administering the vaccine. It maintains all of the original training requirements.

Dentists are already able to provide vaccines in a number of other states, including Illinois and Minnesota. These states both allow licensed dentists to administer the flu vaccine and have successfully increased access and improved convenience for patients seeking flu shots.

Oregon leads the way in our approach to health care. It’s time to take that creativity and ensure that oral health is better integrated with physical and behavioral health. In fact, many Oregonians see their dentists more often than other medical providers; it makes increasingly more sense to view dentists as a primary care provider. This bill takes an important step towards those integration efforts.

We aren’t here to debate vaccine science. But according to the Federal Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, “People in the United States continue to get diseases that are vaccine preventable. Viral hepatitis, influenza, and tuberculosis (TB) remain among the leading causes of illness and death in the United States and account for substantial spending on the related consequences of infection.”¹

The State of Oregon has recognized the importance of life saving vaccines and already has policy on improving vaccine rates for our neighbors.

- Oregon's 2015-2019 State Health Improvement Plan goalsⁱⁱ:
 - Increase the percentage of school-aged children who are vaccinated
 - Increase the percentage of adults who receive annual influenza vaccine
 - Increase the percentage of adolescents who complete the HPV vaccine series
 - Oregon's Healthy People 2020 Goal: 70% of Oregon adults receiving annual flu shots

Further, the recent measles outbreak to our neighbors on the North, hit a little too close to home.

Dentists can help provide increased access to life-saving vaccines and move Oregon towards meeting these state established goals.

And if that wasn't compelling enough, I'd like to share about recent developments connecting HPV with oral cancer. Dentists are often the first provider to see early signs of oropharyngeal cancer, which has been identified as the fastest rising cancer among young white men in the U.S.ⁱⁱⁱ. HPV is linked to 70% of oropharynx cancers^{iv}. The HPV vaccine is simply cancer prevention. Dentists are being encouraged to discuss HPV with their patients and the importance of the vaccine—why not have it accessible at the same time? After all, according to data from the ongoing NHANES^v study, approximately 26 million Americans on any given day have an oral HPV infection.

HB 2220 is an access bill. Dentists can provide the flu shots when they travel in a mobile dental van to rural Oregon. Dentists can provide a measles booster in the middle of an outbreak. Oregon dentists are ready to serve their communities in this additional way to help further the health of our whole state.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions.

ⁱ Office of Disease prevention and Health Promotion <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/immunization-and-infectious-diseases>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/About/Documents/ship/oregon-state-health-improvement-plan.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.cancer.gov/news-events/cancer-currents-blog/2017/hpv-vaccine-oral-infection>

^{iv} The National HPV Vaccination Roundtable February 2018

^v Oral Cancer Foundation <https://oralcancerfoundation.org/understanding/hpv/hpv-oral-cancer-facts/>