

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1550
February 17, 2020

Chair Salinas and Members of the House Health Care Committee,

For the record, my name is Lisa Rowley, I am a dental hygienist, and I reside in Portland. I am a member of the Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association, and I am here to convey ODHA's support for Senate Bill 1550 that would allow expanded practice dental hygienists to provide interim therapeutic restorations, also known as ITR, for their patients.

Interim therapeutic restorations are temporary fillings that are placed on decayed teeth after the decay has been removed with a hand instrument. ITR is used to prevent tooth decay from progressing and causing further damage to a tooth.

ITR is an effective way to treat tooth decay that does not weaken the tooth or hurt the patient. This procedure can be done without drilling the tooth, so healthy tooth structure is not lost. And because there is no drilling, there is no need for local anesthesia.

ITR is primarily used in children who do not have access to routine dental care. ITR can stop the decay process until the child can have a permanent filling placed by a dentist. Children with untreated dental decay can have difficulty chewing and speaking. The pain and infection from untreated dental decay can cause children to have difficulty paying attention in school and these children are much more likely to miss school altogether.

Oregon's dental pilot project #200 has demonstrated that expanded practice dental hygienists can effectively slow down the progression of dental decay in children by using interim therapeutic restorations as part of a school-based preventive dental program. It is time to let all expanded practice dental hygienists in Oregon use ITR to prevent dental decay from progressing.

In closing, the Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association supports Senate Bill 1550 because it will give expanded practice dental hygienists another tool to prevent the progression of dental decay, particularly for children who lack access to routine dental care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.