



3/3/21

Chair Prusak and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon School Based Health Alliance would like to enthusiastically endorse HB2528. This bill could have a tremendously positive impact on the lives of children.

As many as 30% of children in poverty have serious oral health issues, but yet have little access to treatment. Oregon's 78 school-based health centers are required to provide oral health services, or connection to such services, but the workforce crisis and the lack of providers willing and able to provide basic services, especially in rural area, is a constant challenge.

The bill before the Legislature is a first step towards filling this capacity gap. Why is this so important? Simply because we know that untreated oral health issues not only lead to other more serious long term health issues, but also negatively impact education outcomes and success in school, leading to long term impacts for Oregon's economy and social services networks.

I am working with a school district right now that is developing a school-based health center and in the first meeting heard about a new student who was unable to participate in school because of the amount of mouth pain they were experiencing. The youth had been given braces and then not been able to see a dentist for three years. It took the school staff a huge amount of time and a lot of searching, and they could only find one provider in the entire community that agreed to see the student.

This is a simple, common sense bill that will make a difference for kids. We urge your support on HB 2528.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen Hinman".

Maureen Hinman
Interim Executive Director
Oregon School-Based Health Alliance