

HB2528 TESTIMONY

March 4th, 2021

Chair Prusak, Vice Chair Hayden, Vice Chair Salinas, and Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

I am Dr. Jacek/Jack Haciaak, Director of DynamicChanges LLC, and a retired Psychologist and past administrator of several mental health programs.

I am supporting HB 2528 based on: Dental Therapist effectiveness evidence from states which have developed and implemented Dental Therapist laws and practice standards; my review of the professional literature addressing Dental Therapist training and practice; and my own experience providing health services in rural settings.

The states which have adopted Dental Therapists into their health care workforce have shown variable levels of positive impact on dental care unmet needs, particularly for underserved groups and geographical areas. The level of success has varied based on how Dental Therapists have been supported and the structures created to deploy their services. But the evidence of positive effects has been consistent within these variations.

The 2019 Journal of Dental Education article by Frank Catalanotto DMD, "In Defense of Dental Therapy: An Evidence-Based Workforce Approach to Improving Access to Care," provides objective data supporting effective training, rigorous oversight of implementation, and effectiveness and safety of clinical practice in the United States. Additional relevant journal reports share perspectives on Dental Therapist practice consistent with Dr. Catalanotto's findings, and none show research evidence to the contrary.

As a manager of mental health programs in rural areas in three states and on Native lands, I routinely witnessed dental needs as one of a cluster of health care needs in underserved populations. HB 2528 will help meet this need. And newer innovations have shown success combining improved access to dental care with the provision of Peer Support.

HB 2528 would, by all available evidence, improve access to safe and effective dental care for Oregon citizens as a whole. Please move HB 2528 on through the legislative process to passage.

Thank you.

Jacek/Jack Haciaak, Psy.D.