

March 3rd, 2021

Re: Supporting HB 2528

Chair Prusak, Vice Chair Hayden, Vice Chair Salinas, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Jeffrey Guelinas, Chief Dental Officer for the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indian Dental Clinic.

Dental Therapist can provide a valuable service to our community and state. Increasing access to basic dental care not only reduces preventable cavities but also supports overall health. Dental therapy addresses unmet oral health care needs in rural communities, communities of color, and lowincome households across our state. Dental Therapists can also provide a huge cost savings to the overall health system.

Please support HB 2528 and allow the Oregon Board of Dentistry to license dental therapists. Dental therapists are primary oral health care professionals with the training to provide the basic dental care that many Oregonians can't get today — exams, fillings, and simple extractions. Dental therapists have been safely and successfully practicing in the United States for more than 15 years and they are currently working in Oregon under successful but limited pilot programs.

House Bill 2528 does not require any health care systems to employ dental therapists. It merely clears the way for Tribes and other underserved and underrepresented communities to choose to incorporate this provider into their oral health teams. There is much work to be done to turn the tide on oral health care disparities in Oregon, and dental therapy is one solution we urge you to support.

Please support HB 2528 and expand dental care access in Oregon!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeffrey Guelinas,
Chief Dental Officer for the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indian Dental Clinic.