



**CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF  
COOS, LOWER UMPQUA AND SIUSLAW INDIANS  
TRIBAL GOVERNMENT**

1245 Fulton Avenue - Coos Bay, Oregon 97420

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March 4, 2021

Re: Supporting HB 2528

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

We write on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI), one of nine Federally Recognized Tribes in the State of Oregon. As a sovereign nation that is charged with serving our people, the historic inequalities and lack of proper dental care that our underserved communities have endured for far too long must be addressed. We have high hopes in addressing this need today with this Dental Therapy Program. We have seen firsthand the success that this Dental Therapy Pilot Program has brought to our communities. A cornerstone of this program is community. The dental therapists that are trained in this program are members of the community they come back to serve, which has shown to improve patient experience of care. This has brought tears of pride to our elders and our people. Our strong community connections are a structural part of who we are as Indigenous People. Community based models of care is what has been shown to work for our people in increasing access and improving oral health outcomes.

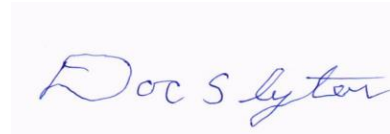
Since the 2020 legislative session, there have been some important progress made for this program. In August, the Alaska Dental Therapy Education program, where our very own dental therapists were trained, earned accreditation from the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). CODA is the national authority on professional standards and education curriculum for the entire dental profession. It oversees standards for the entire dental care team of regular and pediatric dentists, hygienists, oral surgeons, orthodontists and more. This is the first time a dental therapy education program has earned CODA accreditation. This accreditation should appease the concerns about dental therapists receiving adequate training to safely provide services within their scope of practice.

Given that the Oregon Tribes Dental Therapy Pilot Project is set to expire in May 2022, we strongly feel that it is time to pass dental therapy now. The overwhelming financial and administrative burden of the pilot requirements has been negatively impacting our ability to serve our communities to the fullest extent possible. The time and resources spent on extensive oversight and reporting requirements of the pilot program would be much better spent on our underserved community members.

Support for House Bill 2528 would effectively be a positive step in the right direction to support Tribal Nations in Oregon to serve their underserved and underrepresented communities with a model that works for them.

CTCLUSI respectfully requests that you support this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doc Slyter". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light purple rectangular background.

Chief Doc Slyter  
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians