

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2528

March 4, 2021

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

For the record, my name is Roberta Broman and I reside in Lakeside, Oregon. I am a Registered Dental Hygienist and I work for the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians Dental Clinic.

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 2528 that would amend the Dental Practice Act to create a licensed dental therapist for Oregon. Since moving to Oregon in June of 2018, I have had the opportunity to work with two American Native dental therapists trained in Alaska. These individuals have worked through the Oregon Health Authority dental pilot project and are dedicated to improving the oral health of their Tribal members. The community they care for are not just patients, numbers or dollar signs, they are considered Tribal family and each person seeking care at our clinic is treated as such.

In our office, the therapists are the primary preventive providers. Because of their training, they are able to see patients of all ages for sealants, silver diamine fluoride treatments and prophylaxis. This allows more of my time to be spent seeing patients who need more involved dental hygiene procedures.

During the pandemic, the therapists have stepped up and helped in all areas of clinic operations. They have been providing periodic exams for dental hygiene patients to free up the dentist for more complicated dental treatment. Their review of medical histories, radiographs, oral cancer screening, extra-oral and intra-oral examinations are by far the most thorough that I have encountered in my thirty years as a dental hygienist.

Having had the unique opportunity to work with dental therapists, I have found their care to be excellent. They are competent, caring, skilled dental professionals. I urge you to support House Bill 2528 and expand access to dental care for more Oregonians.

Thank you for considering this testimony.