

March 4, 2021

HOUSE HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY FOR HB 2977 DENTAL DIRECTOR FUNDING

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

For the record my name is Dr. Manu Chaudhry. I am the President and Dental Director for Capitol Dental Care (CDC). We are a dental care organization that provides care to Oregon Health Plan (OHP) beneficiaries, through contracts with coordinated care organizations across the state. Also, I am an OHP Medicaid provider and I provide dental services to Oregonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Capitol Dental Care supports HB 2977, which appropriates money to support the State's Dental Director position.

We were very supportive of the statutory establishment of the Dental Director position through SB 672 in 2015. And we continue to be supportive of the position as a way to increase the visibility of oral health as a key component, along with medical and behavioral health, in the overall health of Oregonians.

It is important that the State Dental Director position is funded adequately to ensure that the role envisioned by SB 672 as the state level advocate and leader is successful. This leadership role must be at a level to be influential in health policy discussions and decisions within OHA and the State. It is critical to ensure that oral health and dental care is an integral part of overall health, disease prevention and health care funding for Oregonians.

We respectfully request your support for HB 2977.