



April 2, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Education

Testimony for HB 2969: Directs school districts to provide age-appropriate instruction in oral health as part of health education curriculum.

Dear Committee Members,

The Klamath Basin Oral Health Coalition is writing to express support for House Bill 2969.

Although progress has been made to ensure kids have access to health care, more work is needed in the areas of dental care and oral health education. Low-income children, children of color, and children from rural communities, such as Klamath County, are impacted the most by gaps in access to dental care.

Poor dental health has damaging effects on kids' overall development, putting them at risk for serious long-term health issues. Dental problems drive absenteeism in our schools, and undermine the economic security of working families. Fortunately, childhood dental disease is largely preventable.

School-based dental health services provide efficient screening and treatment, and reduce costly care by reducing the number of kids seeking treatment for nontraumatic dental problems in emergency rooms.

House Bill 2969 puts us on the right path for improving our children's oral health. We put our support behind the bill for the long-term wellbeing of Oregon's kids, and fervently urge you to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Cord Van Riper
Chair

Darlene Swigart, EPDH
Co-Chair

On behalf of the members of the Klamath Basin Oral Health Coalition:

A Smile for Kids Nonprofit
Cascade Health Alliance
Klamath County Public Health
Klamath Health Partnership
Klamath Tribal Health and Family Services
Konnnect Dental Kare

Marilynn Sutherland, Community Member
OHSU School of Nursing
Oregon Department of Human Services
Oregon Tech Dental Hygiene Department
Sky Lakes Medical Center Outpatient Care Management
South Central Early Learning Hub