

March 1, 2021

House Committee on Health Care

900 Court Street NE,

Salem, OR

Subject: Concerns for the direction of HB 2528

Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas,

I am currently a general dentist in West Linn, Oregon. I haven't always lived in a privileged community like West Linn as I grew up in Anchorage , Alaska, a state that currently utilizes a mid-level provider to serve the needs of their very remote and rural tribal communities.

I write to you today to share my concerns with HB 2528. The issue of health equity is long standing and it is clear that it is a serious concern that this legislature is trying to rectify. However, if HB2528 is moved out of committee without significant amendments to both the scope of services, supervision and limitations on the settings in which these providers can practice, I worry that the most vulnerable will not be well served. We are taking the most needy communities for medical and dental care and letting the most under-educated practice on them. This doesn't seem equitable at all to me.

The need is clear that we need providers to render dental services to many disadvantaged socioeconomic groups, but this group also has the most unmet health challenges. Letting a practitioner with only two years of education perform the level of care that is outlined in this bill on the most health challenged communities is not a wise move in my opinion.

This bill needs some significant amendments to require that these practitioners have previous dental experience such as first being a dental hygienist. It would be hard for me to imagine that in two years with no prior college education that everything could be taught to keep from a terrible medical tragedy from happening to this population.

Secondly, I feel that if there are not limits on where these practitioners can practice that they will likely work for corporate entities instead of communities where health equity is so important. This has long been the case for many rural communities with other health care auxiliary staff, they leave their small town community for the education but don't return to their hometowns to work.

Please do not move this bill out of committee without substantial revisions and the collaboration of the broader dental community to ensure patient safety and that this truly solves the problem it is trying to solve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kimberly R Wright, DMD, MAGD

West Linn, Oregon