

February 10, 2023

Representative Nosse and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health Care:

My name Dr. Nadia Winstead, and I am submitting my testimony regarding HB 2996 and HB 3223:

De-regulating criteria which is in place to protect and provide quality dental care to Oregonians, without systems in place to help prevent errors, is an enormous mistake.

I've been in dentistry since 1988. The first seven years were as a Certified Dental Assistant. Being a CDA afforded me the opportunity to advance myself through education. I received a BS degree in Speech and Hearing and a minor in Psychology from Arizona State. I then extended my education on to Dental school. I'm a proud graduate of Tufts school of dental Medicine. I have been practicing dentistry since 2002 and have been in private practice in Salem since 2006.

I'm stating this to let you know that I am very qualified on several levels to give an informed opinion regarding some bills that are being presented.

House Bill 2996 Sponsored by Representatives PHAM H, JAVADI, BYNUM; Senator STEINER (Pre-session filed).

"Prohibits Oregon Board of Dentistry from requiring applicant for certification as dental assistant to pass written examination for radiological proficiency. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment."

House Bill 3223 Sponsored by Representatives PHAM H, JAVADI SUMMARY

"Prohibits Oregon Board of Dentistry from requiring applicant for certification as dental assistant to pass written examination. Requires board to adopt rules to establish alternative pathways to certification."

Removing the requirements for passing a written exam is a band aid on a problem not a solution. Our problem is the lack of skilled staff. A much better solution would be to develop training guidelines to help educate the individuals so they can pass the test set by a governing body. By removing the test as an indicator to an individual's knowledge and skill, is to rely on an assumption that the worker knows what they are doing. Assumptions are not concrete and are subjective.

It is imperative to develop guidelines and alternative pathways prior to removing the existing rules. Currently, Oregon does not require assistants to be certified through DANB but they use DANB's standardized testing for radiology licensing and for EFDA duties. So, we already have in place several options for individuals to work in the dental field.

The lack of workforce in Oregon is a broad problem. This is not just a Dental issue. However, removing guidelines to regulate the skill levels is not going to help increase numbers in the workforce. Increasing the opportunity for quality education and incentivizing education can and will increase our Oregon work force.

Best regards,

Nadia Winstead DMD FAGD

