



Chair Nosse and Members of the House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee:

As all of us know, we are in the midst of a generational health care workforce shortage, driven primarily by demographics of an aging population and worsened by effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are no easy, short-term fixes to the shortage. A variety of measures are necessary to mitigate it, especially measures to strengthen the training pipeline.

Willamette Dental Group, which serves around 450,000 people in the Pacific Northwest through its fully integrated dental care system, supports HB2979, as balanced package of investments in attracting and training the dental care workforce.

I call particular attention to Section 9, which would provide funds to develop a common Dental Assistant training module that dental practices could use for what we call “chairside” training. This would provide consistency for this type of training, and would be *in addition to, not replace* community college and private college programs. We need to open every possible door for training Dental Assistants, who play a critical role in care delivery.

We urge the Committee to forward this important bill to the Ways and Means Committee with a “Do Pass” recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

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