

Opposition to House Bill 3223

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care,

For the record, my name is Jill Lomax. I am a dental assisting educator and currently serve on the Oregon Dental Assistant's Association Executive Board that represents 5500+ dental assistants in the state of Oregon.

I am so proud to be a dental assistant in Oregon. Oregon is progressive and allows us as dental assistants to perform many expanded duties that other states do not allow. When utilized to our full capacity, dentists save time chairside and are able to see more patients per day. **However, with advanced skillsets, there is advanced risk, which is why there needs to be oversight to verify patient safety.**

I am speaking to you today in opposition to House Bill 3223 that if passed would prohibit the Oregon Board of Dentistry from requiring a written examination for dental assistants to obtain an Expanded Function Dental Assisting (EFDA) Certificate.

To clarify, a dental assistant can still assist chairside without the EFDA certificate. They can pass instruments, mix materials, suction, and take preliminary impressions. They just cannot perform the expanded function duties as outlined in Division 42 of the Oregon Administrative Rules.

The EFDA certificate also serves as a prerequisite to advanced certificates such as placing sealants, packing retraction cord, and even a restorative certificate where dental assistants can place amalgam and composite restorations.

Understandably, this bill is an effort to support dentists who are experiencing staffing shortages. The American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute, et al., identified the strategies for shoring up the workforce. In addition, DANB hosted a summit in 2022 and identified cross-organizational initiatives that could be undertaken to assure that our future workforce needs are met. While one might think that reducing exams might increase the workforce, **neither study recommended eliminating exams.** Instead, some of the initiatives were to encourage standardizing education requirements and enhance training and competency standards.

The mission of the Oregon Board of Dentistry is "to promote quality oral health care and protect all communities in the State of Oregon by equitably and ethically regulating dental professionals." House Bill 3223 violates the mission of the Oregon Board of Dentistry as it does not promote quality oral health care and does not protect all communities. In addition, this bill undermines the expertise and the decision-making authority of the Oregon Board of Dentistry.

In closing, **I strongly urge you to vote No on House Bill 3223** as it jeopardizes the health and safety of dental patients and lowers the quality of patient care being provided. It unilaterally prohibits professional requirements for dental assistants **without input from most of the dental community**. And it hinders the dental profession from making decisions about dental assistant qualifications that are in the best interest of the public.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jill Lomax, EdM, CDA, EFDA-RF
Dental Assisting Instructor
ODAA Secretary

Sources:

Dental Workforce Shortages: Data to Navigate Today's Labor Market (2022)
https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/dental_workforce_shortages_labor_market.pdf

Dental Assistant Future Workforce Stakeholder Forum Summit Report (2022)
https://danbsfprodassets.azureedge.net/assets/docs/default-source/email-assets-to-share/stakeholder-forum-summary.pdf?sfvrsn=c9af10d1_1