

Opposition to House Bill 2979

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

My name is Stacey Gerger. I have been a Dental Assistant for 22 years. I do support several sections outlined in this workforce package bill, but I am here today to express concern regarding section 9 and 10 of House Bill 2979 in its current language. In this section it is asking for \$2 million dollars to create free, chairside training modules.

Training modules already exist and are available to anyone. These training modules are available through The DALE Foundation (the official affiliate of DANB). These modules support on the job training and can help rural areas that do not have access to formal dental assisting programs. The training modules are updated regularly by educators and subject matter experts to provide participants the skills and knowledge with quality and high standards. This allows anyone (dentists or the public) immediate access to chairside training content and allows the dental assistant to be trained on the job.

Additionally, Portland Community College offers a 9-month program that can be completed in either a hybrid or 100% remote model for rural areas that want access to more advanced dental assisting training. This program is also designed to train on the job and is already being utilized by Kaiser Permanente and others.

Since training modules and remote programs are already available for rural areas, I ask that you amend House Bill 2979, Section 9 & 10.

The \$2 million-dollar funds are better allocated elsewhere.

I understand that there are conversations already occurring addressing the language and we look forward to working together and transparently with the supporters and sponsors of this bill. We believe this bill can be amended to gather overwhelming approval to support each pathway to become a dental assistant in Oregon and help address the critical shortage of dental assistants in our state.

As the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute Pointed out, shoring up the workforce pipeline will require long term changes.

Let's work on this together and transparently.

Thank you for your time and consideration.