

Submitter: Ilya Babiy

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure: HB2996

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Ilya Babiy from Troutdale. I've been a registered dental hygienist for over 15 years. For the last 8 years I have taught full-time as a dental hygiene and lead radiology instructor at Mt. Hood Community College. I've also had the privilege of teaching Radiology at Clackamas Community College to dental assisting students, as well as co-direct a Dental Professions Camp & Scholarship Program held at CCC. This camp is a pathway program that is designed to promote dental professions to students from under-represented minorities and those who come from low-income backgrounds.

We recognize the dire situation that our dental industry is in right now with a severe shortage of dental assistants and hygienists. Even prior to the covid pandemic, our industry was in critical need of more dental assistants and hygienists. Removing exam requirements will not alleviate the issue.

If passed, the Radiation Health and Safety Exam that HB 2996 would prohibit the last remaining standardized measure that helps ensure a certain level of competence by a dental assistant, prior to certifying them to deliver care to our Oregon public.

To put into perspective:

In our program, prior to allowing students to expose x-rays on patients, they have hundreds, if not thousands of practice exposures taken on manikins in order to grow and demonstrate their ability to take diagnostically acceptable radiographs on humans.

Oregon rules for dental assistants already allow practice to be done on-the-job, with no requirement to complete a formal education program. They do this under the supervision of dentists, who are already very busy, with many Oregon dental practices short-staffed. Are they getting the education and training they need in fast-paced, short-staffed dental offices?

Removing this final quality control of a written examination would be grossly negligent and irresponsible. In dental hygiene (and I hope in all dental professional programs) we teach patient-centered care. That means we must always place safety and quality patient care above our needs, goals, schedules, agendas, and bottom line. I would not approve of my children, family, and the Oregon public to serve as "guinea pigs" for the training of dental assistants on-the-job without any formal examination

preparation.

We must take our training and preparation of dental assistants seriously and give it the respect it deserves. After all, this is ionizing radiation we're dealing with, and it is for that reason that Oregon still requires a thyroid collar to be used on children who receive x-rays.

Lastly, I'd like to share that the work of promoting dental professions and filling gaps in the dental workforce shortage must begin early—in middle and high schools. I'm involved in attending career fairs and speaking to high school students about dental professions. I've had many dentists approach me about the critical shortage of DAs and RDHs in Oregon. Some even question why we don't have a DA program at MHCC (co-existing with hygiene). The problem is that we are struggling to fill the already existing DA programs. There are many spots available. We should be focused on ensuring that every single dental assistant education program slot is filled so that we are graduating more DAs who have been adequately trained and ready to safely serve our Oregon patient population. Promotion is key!

Thank you for listening and considering a No Vote on HB 2996. I encourage you to also vote No on HB 3223. Removing written exam requirements is NOT in the best interest of our patients or Dental Health Care Personnel. We should not lower standards for the member of our dental care team that typically takes the majority of all x-rays in the dental clinic.

Thank you for your time,

Ilya Babiy, RDH, MS, EPP

Mt. Hood Community College, Dental Hygiene Faculty, Radiology Lead