

Submitter: Kathryn Torvik
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: HB3223

I am very opposed to HB 3223. Anyone who provides dental care should be certified or licensed! It is unfathomable to me that the Oregon Board of Dentistry would promote such a bill. As a healthcare educator and as a patient, I want to know that the dental assistant caring for me has passed credentialing exams and is highly skilled in radiology, infection control, mixing the amalgams that get put into a cavity, and providing good dental care and assistance. These are not things that should be shortcut.

In-house dental assisting training is decimating the credentialed programs. For what? Short term gain in office help vs. a professional with board certification? Would dentists want someone who's not certified to be giving them dental care? Or to lower the standards for dentists to get licensed? Then why promote the lowering of standards for dental assistants?

I am well aware of the shortage of dental assistants in the community. I am also aware that dentists prefer an EFDA-certified dental assistant. Unfortunately, if things keep going in the direction of trying to lower the standards for these DA's, no one is going to be satisfied. (I've heard that non-credentialed assistants don't last very long.) There will be fewer credentialed programs, fewer high quality dental assistants, and the risk to patients increases. Effort needs to be put into upholding this profession and sustaining the educational programs.

Thank you.