

SB 597 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

Prepared By: Daniel Dietz, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to award grants to school-based dental sealant programs to provide oral health care coordination.

Detailed Summary:

- Specifies that funds will be distributed on a proportional basis relative to the number of schools served by a sealant program.
- Provides rulemaking authority and appropriates 900,000 for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

A dental sealant is a liquid coating applied to the chewing surfaces of molars for the purpose of preventing cavities in children. According to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), most cavities occur in the molars, and school-based dental sealant programs can reduce cavities by 50 percent. Dental sealant programs work with local communities and schools to screen participating children, apply sealants when appropriate, and to refer children for restorative care when necessary.

Based on data reported by Oregon's sealant programs, 32 percent of children screened in 2016-2017 were referred for needed restorative care (link to OHA [School Dental Sealant Program](#)). Certified sealant programs are not required to coordinate oral health care for students who are screened and determined to need restorative care.

Senate Bill 597 directs the Oregon Health Authority to fund grants for oral care coordination provided by sealant programs and directs the Office of Rural Health to fund training for oral health care coordinators and match costs to employ them.