



February 8, 2025

Senate Committee on Health Care
2025 Oregon Legislative Session

I am writing to you on behalf of the Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association (ODHA) to express **our strong support for SB 597** that if passed would direct the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to establish a grant program to provide financial support to certified dental sealant programs that promote and engage in **oral health care coordination** activities.

Many children who receive oral health assessments and dental sealants through OHA-certified programs require follow-up dental care. Oral health care coordination activities can help these children to receive the follow-up dental care that they need from dental providers in their community. Care coordination reduces barriers to care, increases access particularly for underserved children and improves overall health outcomes. This grant program will help create a seamless connection between school oral health care, coordinated oral health care and private dental care, contributing to a strengthening of the overall health care system.

Although the \$900,000 appropriation may sound like a lot of money it is less than the cost of one child being treated in an emergency room for an abscessed tooth that has spread infection to other parts of the body. Oral health care coordination can help keep children out of the emergency room by connecting them to a dental home in their community.

The ODHA represents dental hygienists and the dental hygiene profession in Oregon. We are committed to improving the oral health of the public through advocacy, education and patient-centered oral health care.

We urge you to move SB 597 to the Senate with a do pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

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