



Pediatric Dentistry, LLC

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Chair Patterson and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

As a practicing pediatric dentist myself and a member of the Oregon Dental Association's Legislative Advisory Task force, I urge you to support SB 597, which would direct the Oregon Health Authority to create a grant program to promote oral health care coordination.

We know that dental sealants prevent up to 80 percent of cavities on the chewing surface of back teeth and that untreated cavities can cause pain and infections. Untreated dental pain can be particularly harmful for children as it can keep them home from school, lead to problems eating, and may even prevent them from playing and learning.

In Oregon, I am proud that we already have very successful School Dental Screening and Sealant Programs. These programs connect children with care and remove barriers to seeking oral health treatment, one of the most crucial elements to ensuring underserved populations have access to the treatment they need. Today, 747 schools in Oregon have a Certified School Dental Sealant Program and 26,776 have received sealants through these critical coordinated care programs.

This bill would expand upon our already very successful School Dental Screening and Sealant Programs by directing \$900,000 to OHA to distribute funding among the schools already involved in the program. Because each program would receive a similar amount, there would be no need for an elaborate grant application or additional administrative costs.

This funding is crucial to ensuring that Oregon's children – particularly those in underserved populations – have access to the oral health care they need to keep them healthy. Please consider investing in the oral health care of our children and support SB 597.

*Sincerely,
Neil V. Lawson DMD, PC*