

February 13, 2025

Senate Health Care Committee

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 597

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden and members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Linda Mann. I am the Director of Community Outreach for Capitol Dental Care (CDC). We are a Dental Care Organization (DCO) that provides care to Oregon Health Plan (OHP) beneficiaries, through contracts with Coordinated Care Organizations (CCO) across the state.

On behalf of Capitol Dental Care, we are testifying in strong support of SB 597.

Capitol is one of the largest providers of school based dental sealant programs in Oregon. For over 14 years, our program has worked to improve the dental health of children across the state, and we are proud to have served more than 10,000 children during the 2023-2024 school year alone.

Capitol currently serves 140 schools across Marion/Polk, Yamhill, Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Lane, Jackson, and Josephine counties, reaching children who might otherwise not have access to essential dental care. Our program, which was one of the very first to be established in the state in 2011, has been instrumental in providing free, preventative dental sealants to students, ensuring better oral health outcomes and reducing the incidence of tooth decay.

Our program involves reaching out to schools to inform them about the preventive services we offer. We work closely with school administrators to schedule onsite dental assessments and provide essential care, including the placement of dental sealants, application of cavity-preventive treatments, temporary fillings, and distribution of oral hygiene kits. Additionally, we offer oral health education, helping students and their families learn about the importance of maintaining good oral health as well as referrals for ongoing care.

Care coordination is as needed in oral health as in other aspects of health care, particularly among underserved populations. Oregon has very successful School Dental Screening and Sealant Programs. One in four children seen by these programs require follow-up dental care, some urgently. One in 12 children enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan receive preventative dental services *only* through these programs.

In-school programs need coordination to ensure children are connected with care and to remove barriers in seeking it. This bill appropriates funds to OHA to provide grants to each of the OHA-certified School Dental Screening and Sealant Programs. With your assistance, we can ensure that the vital work of connecting children to offices for follow up care continues, reaching even more students in underserved areas and help to eliminate the oral health disparities that exist among low-income families.

Currently, there is no specific reimbursement available for care coordination within School Dental Screening and Sealant Programs. The bill would appropriate \$900,000 to OHA for each of Oregon's School Sealant Program grantees on a proportional basis relative to the number of schools that a certified dental sealant program serves.

Thank you for your time, attention, and ongoing commitment to improving the health and future of our children.

Sincerely,

Linda Mann, EPDH
Director, Community Outreach
Capitol Dental Care