

February 18, 2025

900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301



Chair Nosse and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

On behalf of the Oregon Dental Association and the nearly 2,000 dentists we represent, I urge you to support HB 2676, which would help address workforce issues in dental offices by increasing mobility and multistate practice for licensed dentists and dental hygienists by bringing Oregon into the Dentist & Dental Hygienist Compact.

Dental offices across Oregon have expressed growing concerns with workforce challenges. One barrier to increasing Oregon's dental workforce is the inability of dentists and hygienists to immediately treat patients after moving from another state to Oregon. This is a particularly important issue for dental practices living in Portland or Vancouver, as dentists and hygienists are currently not allowed to practice on both sides of the Oregon/Washington state border without time-consuming, cumbersome requirements.

The compact, which has already been approved by 10 states including Washington, will allow licensed dentists and dental hygienists to practice in all states participating in the compact, rather than having to get an individual license in every state in which they want to practice, reducing the administrative and financial barriers faced by dental professionals.

At the same time, the compact preserves each member state's authority to regulate the dental health profession, ensuring that states maintain authority over licensure and regulatory oversight. Compact participants must adhere to the laws, regulations, and scope of practice of the states in which they work, preserving and strengthening the existing system of dental licensure, which could include CE requirements such as cultural competency, pain management, and requirements for providing health interpreters services.

It is important to note that the Compact Commission is governed by participating state regulators who are writing the compact's rules now. While ten states have already adopted dental compact legislation, Oregon has a unique opportunity to help shape the rules of the compact by joining this year rather than as a late adopter in the future. In addition, the compact allows Oregon to have authority over how other states treat Oregon licensees through bi-directional reciprocity. The compact will make it easier for Oregonians to practice in other states, along with out of state providers coming into Oregon. Without joining the compact, Oregon will have no control over oral health licensure in other states.

Finally, we recognize that concerns have been raised about whether the compact would impact costs and revenue for the Board of Dentistry. However, existing compact states have not shown any proof of increased costs or decreased revenue. The Board of Dentistry would also have the ability to charge a fee to compact licensees to cover any additional or unforeseen costs.

The compact provides a much-needed solution to the challenges posed by geographic limitations, workforce shortages, and the growing demand for accessible oral health care. By fostering mobility, the compact will help ensure that underserved areas can more readily benefit from the expertise of licensed professionals.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue and we hope you will join Oregon's dental community in supporting HB 2676, bringing Oregon into the Dentist & Dental Hygienist Compact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Zeller', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Caroline Zeller, DDS
President, Oregon Dental Association