
February 18, 2025

Dear Chair Deb Patterson and Senate Committee on Health Care members,

On behalf of All Smiles Community Oral Health — a nonprofit providing no-cost oral health services for more than 20,000 Portland-tri-county patients each year — I am writing to express significant support for **Senate Bill 597**, allocating financial resources for care coordination activities at school dental sealant programs.

Our state-certified oral health program saw patient acuity increase significantly in the wake of the Covid pandemic, with a spike in care coordination referral volumes for patients needing follow-up care. All Smiles doubled our care coordinator employee count in 2024 to serve this higher volume of acute patients, as described below and in the appendix.

- The number of children referred to care coordination services through All Smiles has more than doubled since the 2021-22 school year.
- Last year, 27% of kids participating in our school-based dental-sealant program in tri-county elementary schools had untreated dental decay, up from 20% in 2018-19 (Pre-Covid).
- More than 650 children were referred for care coordination services at All Smiles in the 2023-24 school year. Half had large cavities, pain, or abscesses present. About 85% were enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan.

All Smiles helps patients with dental pain and infection receive timely access to dental care and provides dental resources and support to guardians struggling to navigate the health system. There is more work to be done to increase access to dental care and improve the oral health of our youth, yet our own resources to provide these services are limited. A grant program like the one created by SB 597 would benefit school-based dental sealant programs so that we can continue to serve the growing needs of Oregon children and families.

This bill furthermore aligns with Oregon's health equity goal to eliminate inequities by 2030. It supports "upstream" services and reduces barriers to care for underserved populations. The *2025 Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment* and the *Evaluation of Oregon Health Plan Dental Provider Enrollment* also point to the need for more preventive and community-based services – 1 million Oregonians live in dental professional shortage areas and fewer than 50% of Oregon dentists accept Medicaid.

We ask that you move SB 597 to the Senate with a do-pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

Robin Moody,

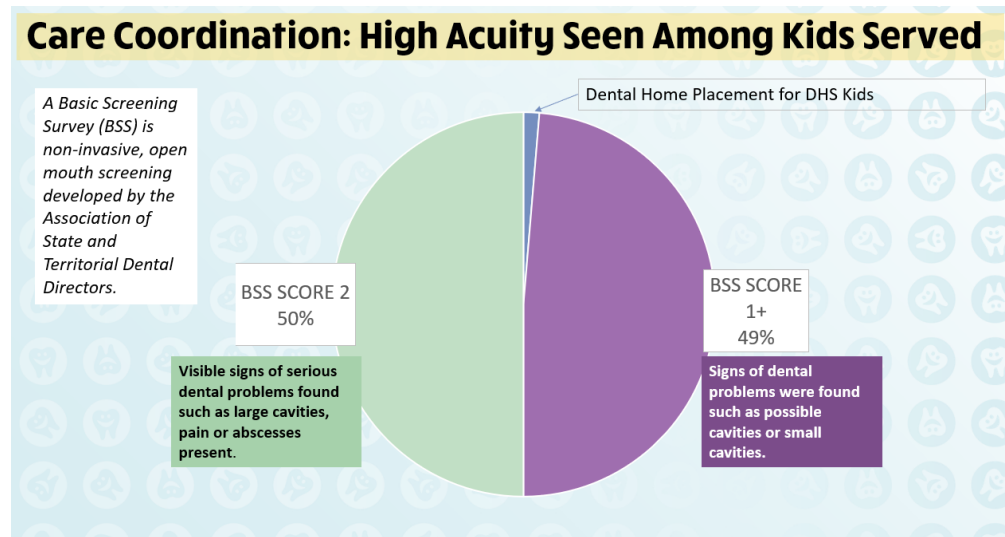
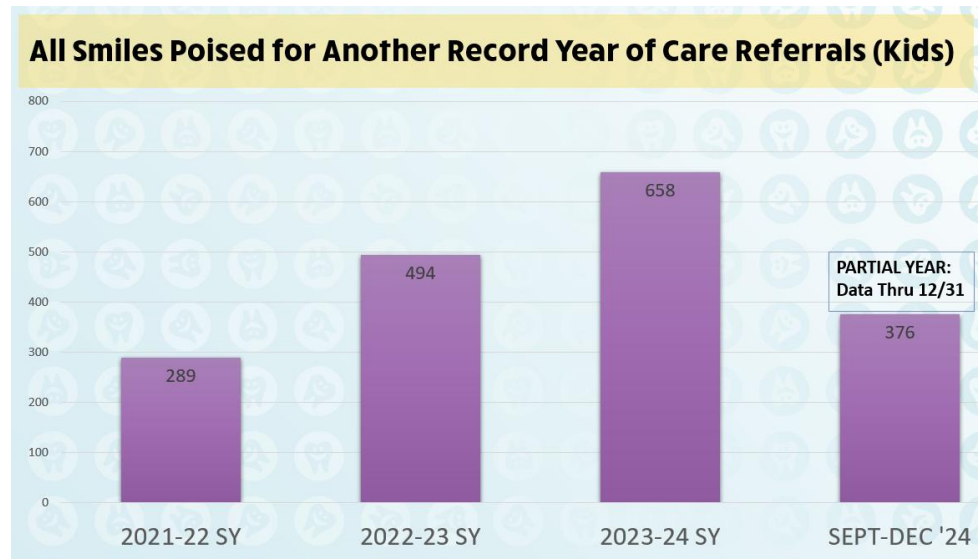


Executive Director, All Smiles Community Oral Health

About All Smiles Community Oral Health

Tigard, Oregon-based All Smiles Community Oral Health is an Oregon Health Authority-certified school dental sealant provider, offering no-cost oral health screenings, fluoride varnish and sealants throughout Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties. We aim to make our services accessible to families by meeting them where they are located.

Appendix



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