

Submitter: Lorena Lavarne
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB597

February 19, 2025

Senate Committee on Health Care
2025 Oregon Legislative Session

I am writing to you on behalf of the Community Health Centers of Benton and Linn Counties (CHCBLC) 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 far less costly than children seeking care via emergency rooms or urgent cares to address dental emergencies. Oral health care coordination can help keep children out of the emergency room by connecting them to a dental home in their community.

The CHCBLC employs dental hygienists and dentists who work in clinics and community settings and see the tremendous need in our region's youth. 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,

Lorena Lavarne, DMD
Community Health Centers of Benton and Linn Counties
Lorena.lavarne@bentoncountyor.gov

530 NW 27th Street Corvallis, OR 97330541-766-6835
www.bentonlinnhealthcenters.org