

Submitter: Yadira Martinez  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB597

Senator Campos  
Representative Javadi  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for Senate Bill 597 – Grant Program for Oral Health Care Coordination

Dear Senator Campos and Representative Javadi,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 597, which establishes a grant program through the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to support certified dental sealant programs in engaging in oral health care coordination. As a licensed dental therapist and dental hygienist with over 20 years of experience in public health, including direct involvement in school-based sealant programs, I have witnessed firsthand the critical need for improved oral health care coordination in our communities.

Children from underserved communities, particularly those who rely on school-based dental sealant programs, often face significant barriers to accessing follow-up dental care. According to data from OHA-certified sealant programs, approximately one-quarter of grade school students identified during screenings require additional dental treatment. However, many of these children struggle to receive the care they need due to financial, logistical, and systemic challenges.

The proposed grant program in SB 597 represents a crucial step toward bridging these gaps. By providing financial support to school-based dental sealant programs, the bill will enable better tracking of children in need of follow-up care, strengthen referral systems, and ultimately improve oral health outcomes. Investing in care coordination also aligns with Oregon's broader public health goals and advances health equity by ensuring that vulnerable children receive timely and appropriate dental care.

In my years working in public health dentistry, I have seen the power of preventive programs like sealants in reducing tooth decay and the long-term costs associated with untreated dental disease. However, these programs can only be fully effective when paired with robust follow-up and care coordination efforts. SB 597 addresses this critical gap by directing much-needed resources to ensure that children receive

comprehensive dental care beyond initial screenings and preventive treatments.

I urge you and your colleagues in the Oregon Legislature to pass SB 597 and demonstrate a continued commitment to the oral health and overall well-being of Oregon's children. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue, and I appreciate your consideration of my support for this legislation.

Sincerely,  
Yadira Martinez  
Dental Therapist, EPDH