

March 11, 2025

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden & Members of the Senate Health Care Committee:

The Oregon Dental Association (ODA) is pleased to support Senate Bill 772 which would provide free tuition for Oregon tribal members pursuing a health professional degree at OHSU, including at OHSU's School of Dentistry. The ODA has supported similar bills in the 2017 and 2021 Sessions.

The ODA is committed to building relationships with our tribal partners across the state to ensure equitable access to quality oral healthcare. As we have traveled to tribal dental clinics and learn about their unique opportunities and challenges, one trend we hear is the need for culturally competent providers while maintaining expected standard of care. Finding pathways for tribal students to enter and complete dental school, we view, is a critical piece of the access puzzle. The ODA strongly believes that training more tribal members as dentists is the ideal way to increase access to highly skilled and culturally competent care.

Removing potential financial barriers is a critical step to help encourage tribal members to pursue careers in dentistry, and we fully support this measure. We look forward to welcoming additional dentists into our profession.

Sincerely,



Caroline Zeller, DDS
President, Oregon Dental Association