

ODA Board of Trustees Approves 2025 Legislative Agenda

ODA's Regulatory Advisory Council's legislation agenda focuses on insurance reform, a multi-state dental compact, and improving reimbursement rates

As our members know, advocating for the dental profession and oral health care is one of the primary functions and one of the valued benefits of the Oregon Dental Association. With the 2024 short legislative session behind us, our team has been hard at work developing our 2025 legislative agenda, in partnership with the ODA's Regulatory Advisory Council (RAC) and Board of Trustees.

Each year, as we develop and determine our legislative priorities, we ensure we are listening to the feedback and input of our members and what challenges you are seeing in your dental practices. In the last long legislative session in 2023, we heard from our members that a lack of insurance transparency often led to unexpectedly low reimbursements, so we helped pass HB 3008, which made Oregon the first state in the nation to require dentists' active consent before a network lease can occur, in addition to requiring dentists' consent to being reimbursed by insurance providers via credit cards. This law is effective for all new contracts entered into after January 1, 2024.

This year, we heard from our members who are concerned about retroactive denials, prompt pay issues, mobility of dental licensure, workforce challenges, and Medicaid reimbursements. The attention to these issues reflects the diversity our membership. Keeping in mind both the priorities identified by our members and the political realities of funding new programs when the legislature is looking at a more limited budget than in past years, our RAC agreed to a three-part 2025 legislative agenda, which was approved by the Board of Trustees in July.

The ODA's 2025 legislative agenda includes:

1. **Insurance Reform** – The Oregon Dental Association is working on policy solutions to help patients better understand their dental insurance and use their coverage more effectively (and reduce the administrative burden on providers). We anticipate that ODA's insurance reform priorities will either be included in one umbrella package or a variety of standalone legislative concepts including legislation on:
 - Retroactive denials: Limiting the time frame within which an insurer may demand a refund on a claim they have already paid out
 - Prompt Pay: Shortening the payment window from insurers to dental offices
 - Assignment of Benefit: Allow patients to choose to have payment sent directly to their provider

Dental insurance should be reliable and predictable for patients and their dentists. Unfortunately, dental insurance providers are not transparent about costs, often leading to surprise fees that create anxiety and financial hardship for patients. The proposed insurance reform packages are anticipated to help simplify billing practices and fees that unnecessarily raise the costs of care and limit choice and flexibility for the patients, in addition to relieving some of the administrative burden that dental offices and staff face in working with insurers.

2. **Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact** – This [compact](#), which has already been approved by seven states, will increase mobility and multistate practice for licensed dentists and dental hygienists, while preserving state sovereignty as it relates to licensure and ensuring patients have access to the highest quality of care.

The compact will play an important role in addressing some of the workforce challenges the dental industry is facing, as it will allow licensed dentists and hygienists to immediately treat patients after moving from another state to Oregon. This is a particularly critical issue for dental practices or practitioners living in Portland and Vancouver as it will allow dentists and hygienists to practice on both sides of the Oregon/Washington state border.

Through engagement with the American Dental Association, it is clear that this compact will soon be introduced in Oregon, as it has with so many other states already. We look forward to leading the conversation on this issue and helping move this legislation forward to ensure mobility for our licensed dentists and dental hygienists.

3. **Dental Reimbursements for Oregon Health Plan** – The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is anticipating cutting dental rates for the Oregon Health Plan population by 3-6% in 2025. A short-term funding solution to offset those cuts was proposed by the ODA and other stakeholders in 2024 but failed to move forward. In 2025, ODA will continue to prioritize urging OHA to address Medicaid reimbursements so that more dentists are able to serve our most vulnerable Oregonians and so that every patient has access to high-quality dental care where they live.

Since early summer 2024, the ODA team has been engaged in conversations with the OHA to ensure that dental voices, perspectives, and challenges are heard when the OHA is making decisions about reimbursement rates. Having our members' voices at these tables is critical for our advocacy work, particularly on dental reimbursements. We look forward to continuing these open conversations with decisionmakers at every level on this critical issue for dentists.

We know that not every priority issue for every one of our members is included in these 2025 legislative priorities; however, the RAC believes the agenda is well balanced. One of the challenges of developing a legislative agenda is keeping in mind not only what we most want to achieve during a legislative session, but also what is feasible to achieve. Some of our priorities – such as a broad dental workforce package and funding for the Oregon Wellness Program – will remain longer-term priorities for the ODA, even if they are not issues that we anticipate addressing in the coming legislative session. We continue to engage with the Oregon Dental Assistant Association and other stakeholder groups, such as the Oregon Dental Assistant Association and the Oregon Dental Hygienist's Association, to find ways to help address the workforce shortages that so many of our members continue to face.

While each of these three legislative concepts are still in the beginning stages, we look forward to hearing more from our members about how we can best develop these policies to fit your needs. If you are interested in getting involved with our advocacy work or helping us develop these policy priorities, please reach out to ODA's Director of Government and Regulatory Affairs, Brett Hamilton, at bhamilton@oregondental.org or if you have an issue or ideas for future legislation that you

believe ODA should pursue in a future session please contact us, [here](https://www.oregondental.org/government-affairs/advocacy/legislative-concept-submissions)
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