

ODA April Legislative Update

The last two weeks have been extraordinarily busy for ODA's advocacy team and so many of our members who have been involved in our advocacy work!

Last week, ODA and a contingent of Oregon dentists participated in the ADA's lobby day in Washington, D.C., joining more than 1,200 dentists and dental students to advocate for policies to improve oral health and access to oral health care. Our Oregon advocacy team was able to meet with many members of Oregon's congressional delegation and talk with them about the need to prioritize oral health care. These relationship building opportunities came at a particularly crucial time as the CDC's Division of Oral Health was eliminated amid federal restructuring on April 1 and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. called on the CDC to stop recommending fluoridation of water supplies across the country.

At the same time, hearings on many of ODA's priority bills were held in the Oregon legislature, just ahead of the April 9 deadline for bills to be passed out of their committee of origin. While one of our priorities – the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact bill – failed to move forward, others remain alive even as the field of bills narrows.

With the growing national narrative against oral health priorities and the oral health bills moving through the Oregon legislature, there has never been a more important time to be involved in organized dentistry. If you have questions about a particular bill or policy priority or would like to get involved in our advocacy efforts, please do not hesitate to reach out to ODA's Director of Government and Regulatory Affairs, Brett Hamilton, at bhamilton@oregondental.org.

ODA Bill Updates

SB 532: Dental Insurance Reform

The ODA's insurance reform bill, [SB 532](#), received a hearing in the Senate Health Care Committee on April 1. Dr. Caroline Zeller, Dr. Scott Hansen, and Dr. Allen Cheng all testified in support of the bill before the committee, while Dr. Denise Gates also submitted written testimony in support. There was no opposition testimony provided at the hearing or in written form, although we know some insurers are advocating behind the scenes to extend the deadline for prompt payment from 30 days to 45 days. The Committee unanimously passed the bill out on Tuesday, April 8 after adopting the -1 amendment, which removes unnecessary reporting requirements that were carried over from the medical statute, clarifies that clean claim includes legible handwriting, and pushes out the effective date of the bill to January 2027 to minimize disruption to plan years.

As a reminder, SB 532 will increase insurance reliability and predictability for patients and dentists by aligning dental insurance laws with existing medical insurance laws. The bill reforms three dental insurance issues: retroactive denials, assignment of benefits, and prompt pay, ensuring that claims are paid no later than 30 days after an insurer receives a claim. ODA helped craft these bills

in direct response to our members' concerns about patient confusion and administrative burden for dental offices.

HB 2597: Dental Reimbursement Rates

[HB 2597](#), a bill sponsored by ODA members Rep. Pham and Rep. Javadi, would improve the oral health of Oregonians by requiring the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) to rework the formula used to calculate dental reimbursements for Medicaid patients. The bill passed out of committee on April 8 with only one “no” vote. It will now move to Ways and Means for further consideration.

HB 2676: Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

There were several licensure compact bills being considered this Session, including ODA's bill, [HB 2676](#), the Dental and Dental Hygienist Compact and [HB 3060](#) which would have added Oregon to the PA Compact. These bills received multiple days of public hearings earlier in Session, with the many of the Boards providing opposition testimony or testimony that was “neutral with concerns.” Unfortunately, despite ODA's efforts to differentiate the DDH compact from the other more problematic compacts under consideration, all compacts fell victim to the same fate.

Following the news of a [New York-based doctor facing action from](#) Texas for providing reproductive healthcare via telehealth, and outreach from the Governor's office and others, Rep. Nosse decided to kill **all** compact bills ahead of the deadline—despite significant pressure from the Republican Committee members.

Other Bills of Interest

SB 597: Dental Sealants

[SB 597](#), a bill co-sponsored by ODA member Rep. Javadi, directs the Oregon Health Authority to establish a grant program to provide financial support to certified dental sealant programs that promote and engage in oral health care coordination activities. The bill passed out of the Senate Health Care Committee on March 27 and remains alive in the Ways and Means Committee.

HB 3326: Dental Care for Seniors

[HB 3326](#), a bill sponsored by Rep. Pham and Rep. Javadi, both dentists and members of the ODA, requires the Oregon Health Authority to study barriers to accessing dental care for seniors. The bill passed unanimously out of the House Health Care Committee on April 8 and is alive in Ways and Means.

SB 772: Indian Health Scholarships

[SB 772](#), would establish the Indian Health Scholarship Program to provide free tuition and fees to qualifying Indian health profession students in exchange for the student's commitment to work at a tribal service site after graduation. The bill passed out of the Senate Health Care Committee on April 8 and remains alive in the Ways and Means Committee.

SB 531: Oregon Wellness Program

SB 531, would provide \$1.6M in funding for the Oregon Wellness Program, which supports the well-being of health care professionals through counseling, education and research. The bill passed out of the Senate Health Care Committee on February 27 and remains alive in the Ways and Means Committee.

SB 702- Flavor Tobacco Ban

SB 702 as [amended](#) bans the sale of flavor tobacco, except at OLCC regulated liquor stores. This bill is supported by ODA. The bill passed out of the Early Childhood Committee on a party-line vote this week and is alive in the Finance and Revenue Committee.