

2017 Legislative Session Overview

The Oregon Dental Association focused our legislative efforts on bills that could affect Oregonian's oral health care, Oregonian's access to care, and the practice of dentistry. In partnership with stakeholders, ODA proposed a legislative package aiming to address the needs identified within the Oregon Action for Dental Health.

Oregon Action for Dental Health: 2017 Legislative Package

SB 178: Renewal of the Rural Medical Practitioners Tax Credit

- The Legislature renewed the tax credit, but made eligibility criteria changes to ensure the program costs fit within the state's budget constraints. New eligibility criteria include: a 10-year maximum (starting in 2017) of receiving the credit and a \$300,000 cap on personal income (either filing jointly or individually).

SB 754: Tobacco 21

- The bill was signed into law by Governor Brown on August 9, 2017 and will prohibit the sale of tobacco (although not possession) to minors under 21 effective January 1, 2017. Oregon became the 5th state in the nation to pass such legislation.

Funding for the Medicaid Primary Care Loan Repayment Program Budget Note

- Oregon's Medicaid Primary Care Loan Repayment Program provides loan repayment assistance to primary care clinicians, including general practice and pediatric practice dentists, who care for Medicaid patients in underserved communities. In exchange for a minimum of three years of full-time service in a qualifying location, participants may receive up to \$105,000 to repay qualifying debt, including loans taken out to cover graduate health education costs. This program was renewed in the amount of \$4 million.

SB 911: Native American Health Scholarship Program

- This bill would have established the Indian Health Scholarship Program, providing free tuition and fees for qualifying Indian health professional students at OHSU, including dental students, who agree to work in a tribal service site after graduation. It would have appropriated funding for OHSU to administer the Indian Health Scholarship Program. The legislation passed out of the Senate Education Committee unanimously, but failed to move in the Ways and Means process. The ODA continues to meet with Oregon tribes to discuss partnerships on how to achieve these goals in the future.

HB 3181: Oral Health School Screenings

- In 2015, the ODA and other stakeholders successfully advocated for Oregon's Oral Health School Screenings law, which requires school districts to collect dental screening information for children who enter Kindergarten or turn 7 who are entering school for the first time.

- HB 3181 aimed to clarify and specify the type of information being reported, as well as allowing parents to opt out of dental screening requirements if desired under specified circumstances. School districts would have been required to report reasons parents opt out of the screening for their children and provide data on the number of failures/passes of school screenings.
- The bill passed the House unanimously, but didn't move out of the Senate Education Committee after strong opposition from the Oregon School Boards Association. The ODA will continue to ensure that children receive dental screenings and will work with stakeholders to find a path forward on obtaining dental screening information.

SB 878: Public Notice of Changes to Fluoridation of Water Supplies

- The bill was introduced and referred to the Senate Committee on Health Care, where it did not receive the necessary support to advance or have a hearing this year. Fluoridation continues to be a very controversial subject and legislators wanted to avoid a contentious hearing on the subject given the other difficulties legislators faced in 2017 (budget deficit, transportation package, Medicaid funding, etc.).