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“Very powerful seminar. The included handout is a helpful tool for future planning.” **Natalia Kokoreva, Milwaukie, Oregon**

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Prepare your practice for sale. Prepare to purchase a practice.

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-  **OregonDental channel**
-  **Oregon Dental Association (private group)**
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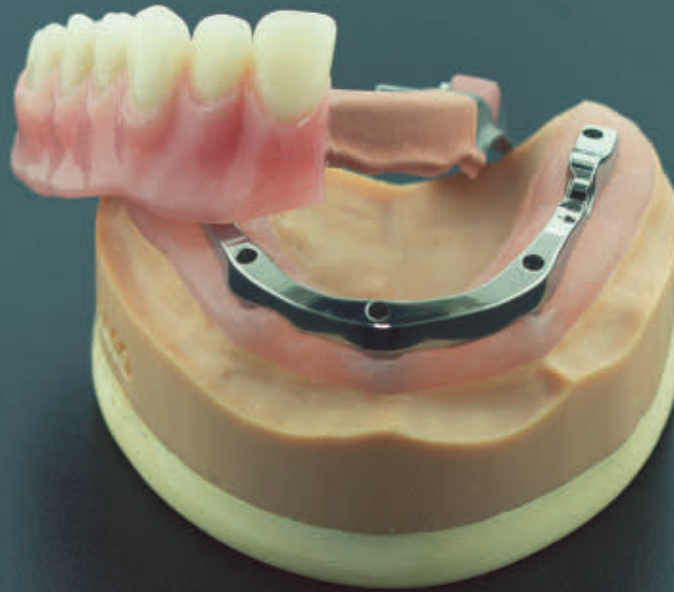
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# Commonality



By Barry Taylor, DMD,  
ODA Executive Director

## THE OREGON DENTAL ASSOCIATION AND AMERICAN DENTAL

Association are a community of dentists who have a diverse range of practice modalities. As of 2023, according to the ADA Health Policy Institute, 32% of all dentists in Oregon are solo practicing dentists with one office location. This compares with 35% nationally. The solo practice, single location office peaked in 2006, when about 64% of dentists were in such offices. If we include all single location offices regardless of the number of dentists at the location, the number would be 71% in Oregon. About 10% of all dentists in Oregon are affiliated with a Dental Support Organization (DSO).<sup>1</sup> Based on this data, we see that most Oregon dentists are still in some type of private practice setting. However, we also see that this majority has decreased over the past 20 years. In turn, we see an increase in offices of multiple dentists practicing in one location alongside an increase of dentists practicing with a DSO. While our practicing setting may be

shifting, I still firmly believe that in this range of different practice settings, there is enough commonality among all of Oregon's dentists for the ODA to continue to be advocates for everyone. Looking at recent ADA and ODA advocacy efforts, it is clear that the agenda helps dentists regardless of their practice modality.

Recently ODA members and OHSU School of Dentistry students visited Washington, D.C., for ADA Lobby Day. They visited five of the six offices of Oregon representatives and both senator offices. Their advocacy efforts focused on two bills currently being considered in addition to advocating for NIH funding to rigorously study the safety and effectiveness of water fluoridation. The Dental and Optometric Care (DOC) Access Act would prevent dental, and vision plans from requiring providers to accept set fees for non-covered services, ensuring fairness in provider contracts. The ODA drafted a similar bill in Oregon over 10 years ago, and it passed. The DOC Access Act, however, would pass it at a federal level, thus including all plans that are covered by Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). ERISA regulates self-funded dental plans, and some insurers exploit this loophole to override state laws. The DOC Access Act would close the loophole and allow dentists to set their own fees for non-covered services, no matter the type of plan their patient has.

The second advocacy point was the REDI Act, which would ensure that medical and dental residents qualify for an interest-free deferment on their federal student loans until after their residency is completed. It would also suspend both payments and interest accrual during the deferment period, preventing additional debt accumulation. Closer to home, the main priority of the ODA's 2025 legislation is Senate Bill 532 which was drafted by the ODA and addresses dental insurance reform. The bill addresses the assignment of benefits, prompt pay, and retroactive denials.

At a national level and in Oregon, organized dentistry's main advocacy efforts are focused on causes that benefit all members, including those that are in private practice. We want to build a stronger community because we are the primary voice advocating for dentists in Salem and in Washington, D.C. We can only build this community if we are inclusive of all practice modalities regardless of their business model. I have been involved in organized dentistry since I graduated from dental school, and it is rare, if ever, that an individual dentist is able to pass legislation in Salem. We are truly stronger together. 🍎

## Reference

1. ADA Health Policy Institute Distribution of Dentists According to Size of Dental Practice and Affiliation with a Dental Support Organization (DSO), 2023 (accessed April 9th, 2025)



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# Welcome New and Returning ODA Members

**WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST AND RETURNING MEMBERS!** Please reach out to these members and welcome them into the ODA community.

**Brandon Knapp, DDS**

Coastal Cascades Dentist Society

**Mitchell Westberg, DDS**

Coastal Cascades Dentist Society

**Nicolas Maxim, DMD**

Washington County Dental Society

**Karen Zhou, DMD**

Central Oregon Dental Society

**Kyle Pett, DMD**

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# Events & Education Component CE Calendar

Calendar provided by Mehdi Salari, DMD


This calendar is current as of April 22, 2025

Please visit the host dental society website for the most up-to-date information.

Date	Dental Society	Course or Event Title	Speaker	CE	Location	More Information
05/15/25	Southern Oregon	Here's a Cool Thing I've Been Doing Lately	Various Speakers	2	West Ortho Medford	sodentalsociety@gmail.com
05/21/25	Multnomah	Annual Meeting/ Table Clinics		2	Kennedy School	Info/Register: <a href="http://www.multnomahdental.org">www.multnomahdental.org</a>
05/22/25	Central Oregon	Regenerative TMD – A Revolutionary Shift in Patient Care	Dr. Tran Miller	2	Bend – Riverhouse	Email Dr. Jessica Henderson (drjessicahenderson@gmail.com)
05/22/25	Coastal Cascades	Goat Happy Hour for Dentists	-	-	Monroe – Original Goat Yoga	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>
05/27/25	Clackamas County	Annual Meeting/ Election of Officers		-	Oregon City (PWFCC)	RSVP to <a href="mailto:executivedirector@clackamasdental.com">executivedirector@clackamasdental.com</a>
06/10/25	Coastal Cascades	Retiree Luncheon	-	-	Eugene – Roaring Rapids Pizza	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>
07/08/25	Coastal Cascades	The Top 10 Financial Planning Strategies for Dentists	Loyd Burleson III – Financial Freedom for Dentists	2	Eugene (Lane Community College)	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>
1/8/2025 & 2/8/2025	Coastal Cascades	Friday CE and Saturday Social with Family Activities	Dr. Timothy Bizga	6	Newport (Best Western Agate Beach)	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>
08/02/25	Coastal Cascades	Morning Golf Social	-		Newport (Agate Beach Golf)	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>
09/12/25	Coastal Cascades	The Esthetic & Long Term Considerations of Cementation & Material Choice	Dr. An	2	Eugene – Valley River Inn	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>
09/12/25	Coastal Cascades	Oral Cancer Foundation Walk/Run	-		Corvallis – Willamette Park	<a href="https://ocf.donordrive.com/event/oregon">https://ocf.donordrive.com/event/oregon</a>
09/18/25	Southern Oregon	Advanced Techniques for Full Arch Cases	Nobel Biocare	2	Margaritaville – Medford	sodentalsociety@gmail.com
09/18/25	Multi-Component	Fall Kick-Off Tailgater	-	-	Wilsonville – ODA Office Parking Lot	Info/Register: <a href="http://www.multnomahdental.org">www.multnomahdental.org</a>
09/23/25	Coastal Cascades	Fall Dentist Social	-	-	Eugene – TBD	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>
10/09/25	Coastal Cascades	Contemporary Approach to Dental Implant Maintenance for Long-term Success	Lynn Peneck RDH MS	2	Eugene – Lane Community College	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>
10/16/25	Southern Oregon	Dental Emergencies	Dr. Rajagopal	2	West Ortho Medford	sodentalsociety@gmail.com
10/23/25	Coastal Cascades	Digital Work Flows in Implant Dentistry	Dr. An	2	Albany Golf and Event Center	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>
11/13/25	Southern Oregon	Fee Schedule Evaluation 38% back	Benco Dental	2	West Ortho Medford	sodentalsociety@gmail.com
12/05/25	Coastal Cascades	Hands-On Stain & Glaze: Chairside Techniques to Set your Practice Apart	Max Thomas	2	Eugene – Lane Community College	Register: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE">www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE</a>

Find this calendar online at [www.oregondental.org](http://www.oregondental.org). Click “Meetings & Events” > “Calendar of Events”.

Looking for additional ways to get CE? The American Dental Association has a large collection of webinars and on-demand video learning opportunities available, many of which are free to members. Visit [adaceonline.org](http://adaceonline.org) to catch up on the latest offerings on your own schedule. 📺

A craftsman in a blue shirt is working in a dental lab. He is wearing a head-mounted magnifying device and is using a torch to heat a small object. The background shows various dental tools and equipment.

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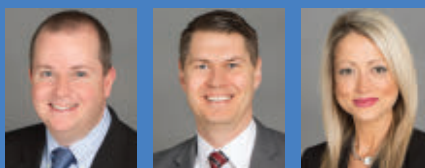
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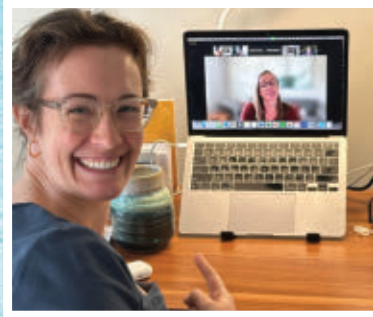
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# SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2025

ODA House of Delegates!



The 2025 ODA House of Delegates will take place virtually on October 11th, 2025. All ODA members are welcomed and encouraged to attend- mark your calendars and plan to serve as a delegate for your local component society. We look forward to “seeing” you there!

## ODA LEADERSHIP POSITION OPENINGS: APPLY BY JULY 1ST.

**Have you ever wanted to make an impact in a new way? Lend your ideas and involvement today!**

ODA has several open positions for members to serve in leadership roles: At-Large Trustee (two positions), Speaker of the House, Editor, and Leadership Development Committee. You can view descriptions of each position here: <https://www.oregondental.org/about-us/leadership-governance/house-of-delegates>

Interested? Submit a completed application and resume to Dr. Barry Taylor at [leadership@oregondental.org](mailto:leadership@oregondental.org) by July 1st. Individuals may still declare candidacy after that date and from the HOD floor.

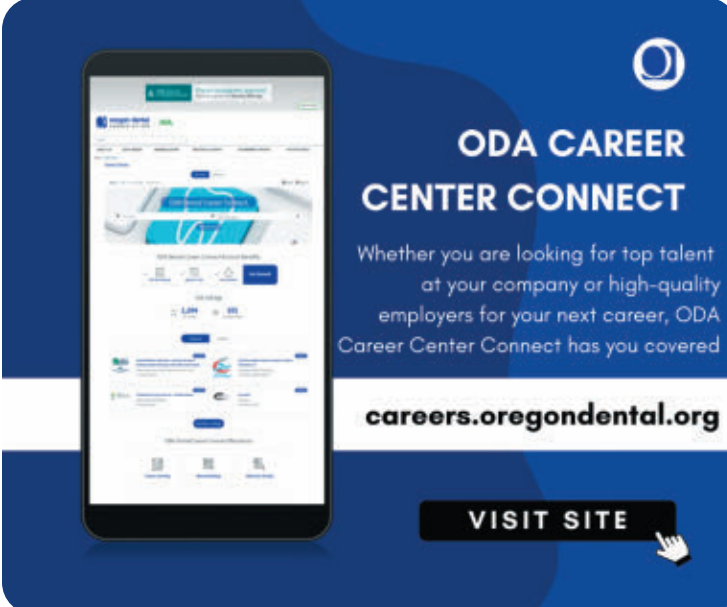


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The graphic features a smartphone on the left displaying the careers.oregondental.org website. To the right, the text reads: "ODA CAREER CENTER CONNECT", "Whether you are looking for top talent at your company or high-quality employers for your next career, ODA Career Center Connect has you covered", and "careers.oregondental.org". At the bottom right is a "VISIT SITE" button with a hand cursor icon. The ODA logo is in the top right corner.

# ODA Seeks New, Innovative Solutions to Address Dental Workforce Shortages

## WE DON'T NEED TO TELL OUR

**MEMBERS** that Oregon's dental offices are facing a critical workforce shortage of dental assistants and hygienists. Approximately 10% of Oregon's 5,480 dental assistant positions are vacant, and there are twice as many open positions as new dental assistants entering the workforce. Occupational projections published by the State of Oregon Employment Department Occupational Employment Projections, 2021–2031, see dental assistants and dental hygienists as two of the most challenging positions to fill in all vacant health care jobs.

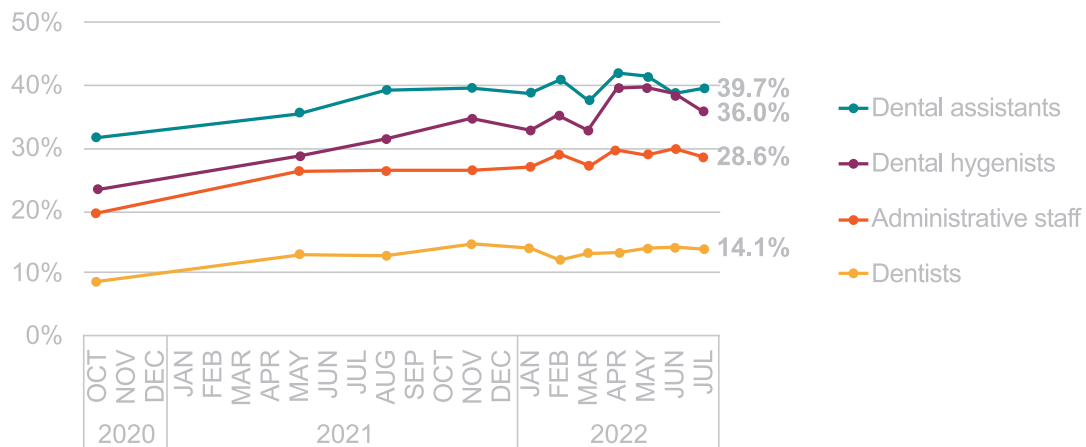
Data from the American Dental Association (ADA) Health Policy Institute (HPI) indicates that in this most recent quarter, 36% of dentists surveyed reported that they were actively recruiting an assistant or had done so in the last three months. Thirty-two percent reported the same for a hygienist. Of those dentists actively recruiting, 95% reported they found recruiting a dental hygienist to be either “very” or “extremely challenging.” Eighty-seven percent reported the same for a dental assistant.

According to the ADA HPI report, *Dental Workforce: Shortages: Data to Navigate*

Occupational Title	Total Job Openings	Percent Change	2022 Median Annual Wage	Entry-Level Education
Dental Hygienists	2,539	8.5%	\$101,795	Associate's degree
Dental Assistants	5,543	8.9%	\$51,022	Postsecondary training



**Have you recently or are you currently recruiting any of the following positions in your dental practice? (Percentages indicating “Yes”)**



Source for data: ADA HPI Data Surveys

*Today's Labor Market*,<sup>1</sup> the vacant positions in dental assisting and dental hygiene have reduced dental practice capacity by an estimated 10% nationally. One in three dentists who do not have full appointment schedules indicate that trouble filling staffing positions is a contributing factor. Workforce shortages were initially attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we now know that is just part of the story.

Enrollment in dental assisting programs has been trending downward since 2015, and the pandemic had a negative impact on dental hygiene program enrollment. While there has been some recovery of enrollment in dental hygiene programs, data suggest that dental assisting program enrollment will not rebound in the near future. As a result, workforce shortages are likely to remain an issue for years to come.

This inability to recruit new members of the dental team is a key priority for the ODA. At the same time, we must also ensure that dentists are able to utilize their current team members to their greatest extent.

However, recruitment of new dental team members remains a top priority to address this critical shortage. Many

dentists have been relying heavily on online recruitment and word of mouth to bring new employees into their offices. Fewer are turning to local hygiene and assisting programs (see table of programs, page 17), and about one in four are using staffing agencies or recruiters. To ease recruitment woes, more than eight out of 10 dentists who are recruiting dental hygienists or assistants have raised their starting pay rates.

One way that the ODA was hoping to expand the dental workforce in Oregon this legislative session was through the passage of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact. The ODA was advocating and collaborating on this important legislation with the Oregon Dental Hygienist Association. The compact would have allowed licensed dentists and dental hygienists to practice in all states participating in the compact, rather than having to get an individual license in every state in which they want to practice. This is a particularly critical issue for dental practices or practitioners living in Portland and Vancouver, as dentists and hygienists are currently not allowed to practice on both sides of the Oregon/Washington state border.

Unfortunately, other occupational compacts were scrutinized, and 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.

The ODA is also working closely with the Oregon Dental Hygienist Association and the Oregon Dental Assistants Association to find local solutions to this shortage. At the same time, the ODA is also exploring ideas, tools, and practices already being used in other states that provide new, innovative strategies to do more within the existing workforce. For example, in December, the Health and Human Services Task Force of the American Legislative Exchange Council adopted the ADA-crafted Dental Access Model Act, which is a model bill that could be introduced in state legislatures. The model supports the expansion of access to dental care by more efficiently utilizing existing members of the dental team and establishing teledentistry standards. The ODA is also tracking a new Dental Assistant Professional Model that has been proposed by the Dental Assisting National Board.

# TRANSITION POINTER

## WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF AN ACCURATE PRACTICE APPRAISAL?

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**PRACTICE TRANSITIONS  
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The ODA knows that the challenge around dental workforce is our members' number one priority, which is why it has become one of our main focuses as an association. The ODA has spent the past year meeting with partners, exploring new and innovative workforce models, and developing resources for our members to help solve this challenge.

Over the past year, ODA has been meeting regularly with our partners at the Oregon Dental Hygienist Association and the Oregon Dental Assistants Association to discuss the workforce shortage and opportunities for collaboration on recruitment and retainment. Oregon is fortunate to have outstanding education programs (see page 17); however, not all of these programs are full, particularly the dental assisting programs. We have discussed different ways to increase the pipeline of the dental team. Our partners tell us that the best recruiters are dentists. Many dental hygienists and dental assistants become interested in the profession from experiences with their dentists. The Oregon Dental Assistants Association has developed a great

poster that you can display in your office. We are also told that a great way to find new members of the dental team is through connecting and engaging them with programs.

To help our members address some of the immediate challenges around dental workforce, we have pulled together and organized information on job boards and educational programs that we hope will help your team. With members in mind, the ODA staff developed a section of its website focused on workforce. Go to **[www.oregondental.org](http://www.oregondental.org)** to discover these collected resources in one place. These efforts reflect the ODA's commitment to ensuring that dental practices are adequately staffed with qualified professionals, thereby maintaining high standards of patient care. 📍

## Reference

1. ADA Health Policy Institute in collaboration with American Dental Assistants Association, American Dental Hygienists' Association, Dental Assisting National Board, and IgniteDA. Dental workforce shortages: Data to navigate today's labor market. October 2022. Available from: [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/adaorganization/ada/ada-oorg/files/resources/research/hpi/dental\\_workforce\\_shortages\\_labor\\_ma](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/adaorganization/ada/ada-oorg/files/resources/research/hpi/dental_workforce_shortages_labor_ma)



# Oregon Dental Assistant Education Programs

January 2025

## Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) Accredited Programs in Oregon

Program
<b>Portland Community College</b> Dental Assisting Program 1810 SW 5th Ave., Floor 3 Portland, OR 97201 <a href="https://www.pcc.edu/programs/dental-assisting/">https://www.pcc.edu/programs/dental-assisting/</a>
<b>Chemeketa Community College</b> Dental Assisting Program 4000 Lancaster Dr. NE Salem, OR 97305 <a href="https://www.chemeketa.edu/programs-classes/program-finder/dental-assisting/course-sequences/">https://www.chemeketa.edu/programs-classes/program-finder/dental-assisting/course-sequences/</a>
<b>Central Oregon Community College</b> Dental Assisting Program 2600 N.W. College Way Bend, OR 97703 <a href="https://www.cocc.edu/programs/dental-assisting/default.aspx">https://www.cocc.edu/programs/dental-assisting/default.aspx</a>
<b>Lane Community College</b> Dental Assisting Program 4000 East 30th Ave. Eugene, OR 97405 <a href="https://www.lanecc.edu/programs-academics/areas-study/health-medical-and-fitness/dental-assisting">https://www.lanecc.edu/programs-academics/areas-study/health-medical-and-fitness/dental-assisting</a>
<b>Umpqua</b> Dental Assisting Program 1140 Umpqua College Rd. Roseburg, OR 97470 <a href="https://umpqua.edu/academics/find-your-path/dental-assisting/">https://umpqua.edu/academics/find-your-path/dental-assisting/</a>
<b>Linn-Benton</b> Dental Hygiene Program 6500 Pacific Blvd. SW Albany, OR 97321 <a href="https://www.linnbenton.edu/future-students/explore-lb/programs/dental-assistant.php">https://www.linnbenton.edu/future-students/explore-lb/programs/dental-assistant.php</a>

## Vocational and Post-Secondary Dental Assistant Programs in Oregon

Program
<b>Portland Community College</b> Integrated Community Dental Assisting Program 1810 SW 5th Ave., Floor 3 Portland, OR 97201 <a href="https://www.pcc.edu/professional/health/dental/dental-assistant/">https://www.pcc.edu/professional/health/dental/dental-assistant/</a>
<b>Clackamas Community College</b> Dental Assisting Program Harmony Campus 7738 SE Harmony Rd. Milwaukie, OR 97222 <a href="https://www.clackamas.edu/academics/degrees-certificates/dental-assistant-certificate">https://www.clackamas.edu/academics/degrees-certificates/dental-assistant-certificate</a>
<b>Rogue Community College</b> Dental Assistant Program 3345 Redwood Hwy. Grants Pass, OR 97527 <a href="https://catalog.roguecc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=11&amp;poid=1289&amp;returnto=689">https://catalog.roguecc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=11&amp;poid=1289&amp;returnto=689</a>
<b>Southwestern Community College</b> Dental Assisting Program 1988 Newmark Ave. Coos Bay, OR 97420 <a href="https://ecatalog.socc.edu/programsaz/certificate-completion-dental-assisting/">https://ecatalog.socc.edu/programsaz/certificate-completion-dental-assisting/</a>

# Oregon Dental Hygiene Education Programs

January 2025

Program	Program Director	Job Postings
<b>Concorde Career College</b> Dental Hygiene Program 1425 NE Irving Street Portland, OR 97232 <a href="http://www.concorde.edu">www.concorde.edu</a>	Scott Ahrens sahrens@concorde.edu	Joan Kilna Senior Graduate Employment Specialist JKilna@concorde.edu
<b>Lane Community College</b> Dental Hygiene Program 4000 E. 30th Avenue Eugene, OR 97405 <a href="http://www.lanecc.edu">www.lanecc.edu</a>	Michelle Cummins cumminsm@lanecc.edu	
<b>Mount Hood Community College</b> Dental Hygiene Program 26000 SE Stark Street Gresham, OR 97030 <a href="http://www.mhcc.edu">www.mhcc.edu</a>	Jennifer Aubry jennifer.aubry@mhcc.edu	DHRecords@mhcc.edu
<b>Oregon Institute of Technology Klamath Falls</b> Dental Hygiene Program 3201 Campus Drive Klamath Falls, OR 97601 <a href="http://www.oit.edu">www.oit.edu</a>	Paula Russell paula.russell@oit.edu  Krista Beaty Site Coordinator Krista.Beaty@oit.edu	<a href="http://www.oit.edu/career-services">www.oit.edu/career-services</a> <a href="mailto:career@oit.edu">career@oit.edu</a>
<b>Oregon Institute of Technology Salem</b> Dental Hygiene Program 4000 Lancaster Drive Salem, OR 97305 <a href="http://www.oit.edu">www.oit.edu</a>	Paula Hendrix paula.hendrix@oit.edu	<a href="http://www.oit.edu/career-services">www.oit.edu/career-services</a> <a href="mailto:career@oit.edu">career@oit.edu</a>
<b>Pacific University</b> Dental Hygiene Program 222 SE 8th Avenue, Suite 271 Hillsboro, OR 97123 <a href="http://www.pacificu.edu">www.pacificu.edu</a>	Amy Coplen amy.coplen@pacificu.edu	Alma Heredia alma.heredia@pacificu.edu
<b>Portland Community College</b> Dental Hygiene Program 1810 SW 5th Avenue, 3rd Floor Portland, OR 97223 <a href="http://www.pcc.edu">www.pcc.edu</a>	Jessica August jessica.august@pcc.edu	Diane Jantze Job Specialist djantze@pcc.edu
<b>Rogue Community College</b> Dental Hygiene Program 7731 Pacific Avenue White City, OR 97503 <a href="http://www.roguecc.edu">www.roguecc.edu</a>	Carmen Mons cmons@roguecc.edu	Carmen Mons cmons@roguecc.edu

## Oregon Wages 2022-2023

	Oregon Median Wage (2023)	Oregon Percent Change from 2022	U.S. Median Wage (2023)	U.S. Percent Change from 2022
<b>Dentists</b>	\$177,440/year	-6.0%	\$191,750/year	+6.9
<b>Hygienists</b>	\$51/hour	+3.4%	\$42/hour	+3.3%
<b>Assistants</b>	\$27/hour	+9.3%	\$22/hour	-0.3%

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# Workforce Shortage Impacts Entire Dental Team

FEATURE

By Melody Finnemore

**THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT DENTAL PROFESSIONALS** are currently under enormous stress and the workforce shortage is affecting the wellness of the whole dental team. As president of the Oregon Dental Assistants Association and an instructor at Portland Community College, Ginny Jorgensen hears from students and colleagues who practice throughout the metro area about the stress they are feeling from being overworked.

While it might be easy to blame the COVID-19 pandemic for the workforce shortage in dental hygienists and assistants, it's actually more multifaceted. A 2022 research report, "Dental Workforce Shortages: Data to Navigate Today's Labor Market," surveyed thousands of dental professionals and found that other factors include insufficient pay and

benefits, negative workplace culture, lack of opportunities for growth, and feeling overwhelmed.

*(The report was compiled by the American Dental Association Health Policy Institute in partnership with the American Dental Assistants Association, American Dental Hygienists' Association, the Dental Assisting National Board, and IgniteDA.)*

Enrollment in dental assisting programs has been trending downward since 2015, and, though impacted by the pandemic, enrollment is not expected to rebound in the near future. Vacant positions in dental assisting and dental hygiene have reduced dental practice capacity by an estimated 10% nationally. One in three dentists who do not have full appointment schedules said that trouble filling staffing positions is a contributing factor, according to the report.





Jorgensen said people she has spoken with who have worked in a dental office for several years have mentioned feeling overworked because they have to pick up the slack when there aren't enough staff in the office or younger staff members don't want to work overtime. At the same time, it seems that the need has doubled and offices are busier than ever.

"One of my best friends who works in a dental office that is really busy said younger people think more about themselves than we did when we were first starting. It feels like they are not as committed, and that's because they are working in a job where they don't feel the appreciation, so it's just a job to them," she said.

In recognizing that the health and well-being of dental hygienists and assistants is paramount, Jorgensen met with the ODA's Regulatory Affairs Council to talk about ways to help dental professionals who are stressed out.

"It's not going to happen overnight, and it's going to take all of us working together," she said. "There is something about working as a team, and not just providing dental care but improving what the profession looks like is going to help everyone."

### **Low Wages, Increased Expenses Add to Financial Pressures**

Brett Hamilton, ODA's director of Government and Regulatory Affairs, said that part of the workforce shortage locally is directly related to COVID. When restaurants, coffee shops, and other establishments were allowed to reopen after the pandemic, they increased their wages and attracted dental assistants who could make the same amount of money or more. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released updated salary information for dental assistants and dental hygienists to reflect 2024

information. Oregon ranked near the top, with an average mean wage for dental assistants of \$57,690, and for dental hygienists of \$115,130. Many hygienists also were lured away by higher pay and decided to retire from the profession.

"This has increased expenses for dentists because costs have gone up but reimbursements have stayed flat," he said. "Dentists are in competition with each other for workforce, and insurance companies add to the drumbeat of stress that impacts mental health."

Hamilton said a growing number of dentists have chosen to join dental service organizations or larger corporations instead of taking on the expense of starting their own practice, especially if they have student loans to pay off. Larger group practices often offer less stress, greater work-life balance, and the opportunity to retire earlier.

"We need to have reimbursement increased. A lot of offices would like to but can't afford to provide paid vacation or certain benefits, and have to balance that with the ability to pay the bills," he said, adding the stress of running a small business is doubled with providing health care.

"We need to create more of a team atmosphere and find ways to make sure team members feel appreciated. People want to be treated with respect and dignity, and they want to be part of a team," Hamilton said.

Lisa Rowley, advocacy director for the Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association, said work-life balance is an issue in all health-care fields, and the pandemic gave many dental professionals who were not working an opportunity to re-evaluate their priorities. Many chose not to return to the profession. That forced practice owners to do more with less, which put more stress on the employees who were there.

"If there are offices that are having trouble finding staff, you are going to see a drop in quality of care," Rowley said. "Assistants are the glue that holds everything together. When you have good dental assistants, you don't notice, but it's when you don't have them that you notice because they make everything run smoothly."

### **Associations Collaborate to Develop Solutions**

Rowley said the Oregon Dental Hygienist Association is working with ODA's Wellness Program to make dental assistants and hygienists aware that they have access to resources, free of charge, through the program. More continuing education on wellness, work-life balance, and the importance of exercise and nutrition also are a focus.

Jorgensen said the Oregon Dental Assistants Association has been building tools for retention and recruitment, including a video that promotes dental assistant careers and postcards about where to get education and training.

"We need to draw people in. One of the problems is that budgets for college dental assistant programs have dwindled to nothing, so marketing is a big key," she said.

Jorgensen also encouraged practice owners to focus on workplace culture through team-building activities such as going on retreats and talking to local high school students about career opportunities in the profession.

"That would help get young people more committed and involved and improve mental health overall," she said. "The students I work with mostly come from the service industry, where their hours were all over the place. They like the idea of being in a professional setting with set hours. I think even the young students coming out of high school like the environment of health care." ●

# Dr. Elizabeth Tomczyk Helps Train New Dentists, Advocates for Future of Dentistry

## AS A NEW GENERATION OF DENTISTS

**GRADUATE** from dental school, many are finding that they prefer a career that takes them outside of the traditional private practice model that has been the norm for decades. Dr. Elizabeth Tomczyk is one of those younger dentists blazing a new and unique path for her career in dentistry.

"I've never been interested in the business side of dentistry, so owning my own private practice never appealed to me," said Dr. Tomczyk, whose first job after her hospital dentistry residency in Chicago was with SmileKeepers, serving low-income patients.

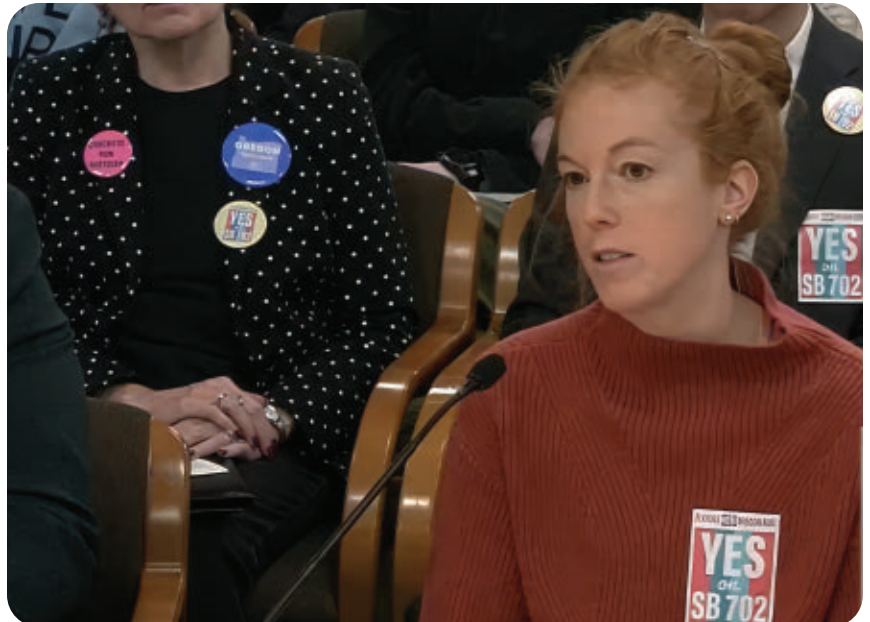
While SmileKeepers is not a federally qualified health center (FQHC), many of the patients that they serve are low-income or use Oregon Health Plan to access their care. This is a population Dr. Tomczyk says she enjoyed serving because it reminded her of the patients she treated when she was in dental school at OHSU. Both the patients served and the collaborative environment appealed to her as she was looking into new

opportunities after moving home to Oregon in 2018.

"I wanted to be somewhere where I would have other dentists to bounce ideas off of and to talk about our work and our patients," said Dr. Tomczyk. "During residency, we would constantly talk about how our fellow recent dental school graduates are already out practicing on their own. That can be a scary prospect for many right out of dental school. Going into an office where there were other dentists to talk to made a huge difference to me, and as I progressed, they would hire new dentists and I would get to mentor them."

That experience mentoring younger dentists prepared Dr. Tomczyk for her newest role as an assistant professor of general practice residency at OHSU's School of Dentistry, where she also serves as the site director for OHSU's dental clinic.

"As the site director of the clinic, I make sure that everything runs smoothly and help train our residents," said Dr. Tomczyk.



DR. TOMCZYK

"We go through health histories, help screen patients, and I also take patients through the operating room at the hospital clinic who have special needs or very sick patients who need general anesthesia for their dental treatment."

While most of the hands-on dentistry at OHSU's clinic is done by the residents, the experience has challenged Dr. Tomczyk's own knowledge with medically and behaviorally complex patients, as well as her experience teaching the next generation of dentists.

"I really enjoy the teaching," said Dr. Tomczyk. "It's so fun to see them get excited about learning new things and seeing the potential of what their careers could look like. I'm not that far out of school, but I still feel old compared to them!"

Dr. Tomczyk also says her experience at the OHSU clinic has taught her a lot in the year and a half since she started her new role because things are constantly changing in the medical world, and the position allows her to work much more on the medical side of healthcare than she would in a traditional clinic.

While her work at OHSU looks different from that at SmileKeepers, Dr. Tomczyk has worked her entire career with primarily underserved populations, so it makes sense that she volunteers in her spare time as a board member for the Dental Foundation of Oregon (DFO).

"At SmileKeepers, one day a week I was on an outreach bus in Sweet Home, where they didn't have clinical space," said Dr. Tomczyk. "We saw Oregon Health Plan (OHP) patients on the bus one day a week, so it's fun to work with the DFO and oversee their work with the Tooth Taxi."

Through the DFO, Dr. Tomczyk helps the Tooth Taxi with fundraising and recommending new venues or populations to serve.

In addition to her work with the DFO, Dr. Tomczyk is on the ODA's Regulatory Advisory Committee (RAC) and is a graduate of ODA's Leadership Academy.

"After I moved back, I knew I wanted a community around me, and the ODA is the easiest way to find that dental community here in Oregon," said Dr. Tomczyk, who is also very involved with the ODA's advocacy work and recently testified in Salem in support of a bill that would ban flavored tobacco products.

"I was involved in ASDA, so I did do a little bit of dental advocacy as a student, but I really feel like dentistry is changing," said Dr. Tomczyk. "It's so much less about small business issues and so much more related to public health and insurance, and I think it's really great that so many of my classmates from dental school are involved and are giving that input from younger and newer dentists into the future of dentistry."

Dr. Tomczyk truly believes that being involved in the ODA is the greatest way for dentists to make a significant change in the industry and for their patients.

"If you don't voice your concerns to someone who can actually make a difference, nothing is ever going to happen," said Dr. Tomczyk. "Plus, it feels good to feel like I'm doing something to help my patients on a statewide level."

While she deeply values the advocacy work of the ODA, Dr. Tomczyk wants other dentists, particularly recent graduates, to know that even if they're not interested



in the advocacy side of the ODA, it's a great community and makes Oregon's dental community seem much smaller.

"If recent graduates weren't involved with ASDA, they might feel a little disconnected from the dental community at large and from the ODA," said Dr. Tomczyk. "I tell them the best way to do that is to get involved, and your voice will be heard, and you can get involved with whatever committee interests you. Through the ODA, you can make a difference and feel supported." ●



# Coastal Cascades Dentist Society Has a Robust Schedule in 2025

By Nissa Newton, Executive Director, Coastal Cascades Dentist Society

**THE COASTAL CASCADES DENTIST SOCIETY** has kicked off 2025 with continuing education sessions in Corvallis and Eugene. In January, Kelli Ngariki from Healthcare Compliance Associates visited the Corvallis Community Center to speak on cultural competency. In February, we had our large medical emergency course with Dr. Sam Bae at Lane Community College. During lunchtime, we held our business meeting, during which we voted

to have Dr. Mercedes Del Valle return as our president and to welcome Rachel Meek to our council. In March, Dr. Bryan Trump from the University of Utah's Oral Pathology Laboratory spoke to audiences in both Corvallis and Eugene on topics related to oral pathology. The Eugene class provided a hands-on opportunity, complete with mouth models and a suturing kit to practice performing biopsies. The attendees at both classes were also provided with a biopsy kit



*Hands On Biopsy, 3/14/2025, Eugene, Lane Community College*





that they could use to submit their biopsies. This is the second time we have brought Dr. Bryan Trump to Oregon. CCDS Treasurer Dr. Travis Alcorn recommended Dr. Trump as a speaker. Dr. Alcorn once had Dr. Trump as a teacher and knew that we would enjoy his deep understanding of pathology in addition to his humor. One example of his humor was his tie.

While it appeared to be a beautiful purple flower pattern, in reality, the design originated from colon cells. There is still a lot more planned for the rest of the year. Next on our calendar is our Spring Social at 255 Madison on April 15th, and Dr. Greg Psaltis' pediatric lectures on May 1st and 2nd in Corvallis and Eugene, respectively. We will also be holding a Goat Happy Hour in

Monroe at Original Goat Yoga on Thursday, May 22nd. Our annual Retiree Luncheon is on June 10th this year at Roaring Rapids Pizza. We are also planning a fun, family-friendly event in Newport, August 1st, and 2nd. On Friday, GC will be bringing in Dr. Timothy Bizga for an all-day Friday CE, followed by a Saturday morning golf outing and a family luncheon at the Oregon Coast Aquarium. 🐐



*Dr. Bryan Trump – Oral Ulcerations: What's Eating You, 3/13/2025 – Corvallis Community Center*



*Dr. Sam Bae – Medical Emergencies 2/21/202 – Eugene, Lane Community College*



# Rogue Valley Dental Society Welcomes Caleb Carter

By Cameron Cutler, Rogue Valley Dental Society Executive Director

**WE WERE PLEASED TO WELCOME CALEB CARTER** from Trusted Practice Transitions to speak to us in Grants Pass on April 1st. His topic was “To DSO or Not to DSO: That Is The Question.” With dental service organizations becoming a more prevalent practice modality, and with many DSOs offering to buy existing practices, it’s good to know the ins and outs and benefits and drawbacks of doing business with them. Caleb was extremely thorough, taking time to answer every question. If a DSO purchases a practice, Caleb shared that most DSOs want the dentist to stay on for a certain number of years to ease the transition. We also learned that it’s

important to make sure you analyze the financial impact of sharing your revenue with a DSO. If you are considering this partnership, Caleb encouraged dentists to do your homework on the financial strength of the DSO as well as the added value they provide. If you are entertaining joining a DSO, it’s a great idea to identify a colleague or professional to help you through the process. With an MBA from the Marriott School of Business and special training in complex business negotiations, Caleb has real hands-on experience in practice sales and management. He has been in the industry for over 15 years, and his results speak for themselves. 📍



CAMERON CUTLER

# Beware of the IRS and DOL: Five Red Flags They Seek on Form 5500

**THE FORM 5500 IS AN ERISA REQUIREMENT** for retirement plans to report and disclose operating procedures. Financial professionals use this to confirm that plans are managed according to ERISA standards. The form also allows individuals access to information, protecting the rights and benefits of the plan participants and beneficiaries covered under the plan.



Make sure you are compliant. Be aware of red flags that the IRS and DOL look for on Form 5500 filings:

- 1. Not making participant deferral remittances “as soon as administratively possible” is considered a fiduciary breach** and can make the plan subject to penalties and potentially disqualification. Delinquent remittances are considered to be loans of plan assets to the sponsoring company.
- 2. An ERISA fidelity bond (not to be confused with fiduciary insurance) is a requirement.** This bond protects participant assets from being mishandled, and every person who may handle plan assets or deferrals must be covered.
- 3. Loans in default** for participants not continuing loan repayments, or loans that are 90 days in arrears, **are a fiduciary breach** that can make the plan subject to penalties and disqualification.
- 4. Corrective distributions**, return of excess deferrals and excess contributions, along with any gains attributed **must be distributed in a timely manner** (typically two and a half months after the plan year ends). In some cases, these fiduciary breaches can be self-corrected if done within the same plan year in which they occurred and may be considered additional breaches if they extend beyond the current plan year.
- 5. Delinquent Filings:** If errors are found or the form isn't filed on time, using the Delinquent Filer Voluntary Compliance Program (DFVCP) can help mitigate penalties.

This is a partial, not exhaustive list of common Form 5500 red flags. If you're concerned about ERISA compliance, contact your financial professional sooner, rather than later.

For more background on Form 5500, visit the Society for Human Resource Management online. See “Regulatory 5500: What is Form 5500, and where are instructions for completing it?”

**For assistance with ensuring your Form 5500 is compliant, please contact us.** ●

*Retirement Advocates is an Oregon Dental Association endorsed entity for retirement planning. Contact Garret Dastrup at [garrett@opportunuswealth.com](mailto:garrett@opportunuswealth.com) for more information.*



# Winter Webinar Series – Thank You for Making It a Success!

## THE OREGON DENTAL ASSOCIATION'S WINTER WEBINAR SERIES

was created to provide our members with the opportunity to receive Oregon Board of Dentistry-required courses before the licensure deadline of March 31st. A webinar a month was offered in January, February, and March. The webinars were exclusively for ODA members and completely free. This series featured local Oregon experts Kelli Ngariki, who spoke on cultural competency and infection control, and Dr. Steven Beadnell, who gave a 2025 update on medical emergencies.

This series allowed us to award 235 CE certificates to our members, and all in time for their licensure renewal on March 31st!

We are looking forward to bringing this series back in 2026. Your feedback is important to us. Please follow this QR code to take a brief survey on how we can improve next year. ●



*Dr. Steven Beadnell*



*Kelli Ngariki*







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