

Email From: Deborah Loy
To: Jessica Nguyen-Ventura
Subject: HB2972 Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR)

Dear Jessica,

My name is Deborah Loy. I am the Executive Director of Government Programs for Capitol Dental Care, a large dental care organization serving Oregon Health Plan members. Dental disease has been identified by more than one US surgeon general as the silent epidemic. It is the number one chronic disease in children more common than asthma. Several years ago in Maryland an unthinkable tragedy rocked this state to its core. A 12 year old boy 'died' of a treatable dental infection that spread to his brain.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marian-wright-edelman/deamonte-drivers-dental-care_b_831705.html

For years I have shared with policy makers that the mouth does not know it is supposed to be a 'separate' policy area. When it is sick the body is sick. Oregon's Department of Education is charged with educating children, but that goal is impossible for a child sick and suffering from dental disease. Unlike other diseases dental disease is mostly preventable. It is not an equal opportunist and diagnosed far more frequently in disadvantaged low income children.

One key predictor of a child having future dental disease is whether he/she has dental disease in his/her primary (baby) teeth. If we can prevent dental disease in primary teeth that child has a jump start on prevention of oral disease in his/her permanent teeth.

It is with great dis-appointment that the proposed rules for implementing HB2972 fail to capture dental disease information. In lieu of capturing/tracking this critical piece of information the rules simply require a yes or no to whether a dental screening has been done. It is curious to me if a school was screening for communicable disease would a yes or no to a child being screened be the only information tracked? I would suspect not because knowing if a child 'had' the communicable disease being screened for would be important to know.

I would ask that the schools also include capturing/tracking oral health information from the screening. Since Deamonte Driver's death I personally have been on a mission to raise awareness in our state surrounding dental disease and its impact on health (including the health of children). It is not just about teeth. I would ask that the information a school tracks from the dental screenings be re-considered.

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