



May 18th, 2016

State Board of Education
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310-0203

RE: OAR for HB 2972

Tooth decay remains a significant public health concern and causes needless pain and suffering for many Oregon children, despite being wholly preventable. The consequences of dental disease are numerous, and include problems with eating and speaking, an inability to focus on learning, and lower self-esteem.

Currently, the Oregon Smile Survey is the only child based oral health surveillance system we have in the state, and it is only conducted every five years. Although it is a statistically accurate survey, it is limited to 82 schools state wide. According to the survey, on any given day, as many as 3,800 children in Oregon are suffering from dental pain or infection. Without specific data, we currently have no way to know who is suffering and we are unable to identify areas with the greatest need. We advocated for the dental screening program as a first step in helping us identify specific needs, so we are better able to target programs and services to children in those areas.

We are asking today that you reconsider your proposed rule to include capturing the outcome of a dental screenings as critical piece of information, instead of simply requiring a yes or no to whether a dental screening has been done. We are in dire need of surveillance data and dental screening outcomes will be critical in our ongoing efforts to not only prevent cavities, but treat them promptly when they occur, especially given the potential consequences of oral disease for school-age children.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joni Young", is written over a faint, light-colored signature line.

Joni Young, DMD
President
Oregon Dental Association