

TITLE: Advancing Dental Therapy in Oregon Through a Pilot Project

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Topic: Dental Therapy in Oregon Target Audience: Anyone in the health care field.

ABSTRACT: In 2011, legislation for dental therapy was introduced in Oregon but stopped short of full licensure approval. Instead, legislature authorized dental pilot projects that would address any one of the following: teaching new skills to existing categories of dental personnel; developing new categories of dental personnel; accelerating the training of existing categories of dental personnel; or teaching new oral health care roles to previously untrained individuals.¹ Dental pilot projects are approved and monitored by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). The expectation of the dental pilot project legislation is to assess new workforce models that aim to increase care to populations with the highest disease rates and the least access to care. Approved in 2020, Pilot Project #300 (Dental Hygiene Restorative Function Endorsement Model), fits the definition of accelerating the training of existing categories of dental personnel. In this model, dental hygienists with a Restorative Functions Endorsement are trained to acquire the additional skills necessary to become dental therapists.² The project is sponsored by Willamette Dental Group in partnership with Pacific University. The didactic and lab modules of the education are completed at Pacific University. The curriculum is designed to allow a practicing dental hygienist with a Restorative Function Endorsement to continue working full-time while gaining 13 additional skills to become a dental therapist. The didactic coursework is completed online with lab sessions taking place every other Saturday from 8am-5pm for two semesters. The clinical training takes place at the trainee's place of employment under direct supervision of a supervising dentist. The first two semesters each include 64 hours of clinical care on manikins and 31 hours of clinical patient care under direct supervision. At the end of the second semester, students take a clinical board exam on manikins administered by Central Regional Dental Testing Services (CRDTS). The pilot training is completed during the third semester: Preceptorship. The preceptorship stage consists of 172 hours of clinical patient care under the direct and indirect supervision of the supervising dentists. Since legislation approval, Pilot Project #300 has accepted two cohorts. The first cohort began training with ten students in February of 2020, of which seven students have either completed their training or are currently in the process of completing their preceptorship. All seven students from cohort one have passed the CRDTS board exam. The second cohort began in August of 2021 with eleven students and all eleven students are currently in their second semester of training. In 2021, House Bill 2528 passed with bipartisan support and was signed into law in July of 2021, creating a dental therapy license in Oregon. The final legislation specifies that applicants for a dental therapy license must have completed a dental therapy education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) or have participated in an approved dental pilot project. All students who have successfully completed training in Pilot Project #300 will be able to apply for licensure to practice dental therapy in Oregon. This poster provides an outline of the Pilot Project #300 curriculum. References¹.76th Oregon Legislative Assembly

[Internet]. Senate bill 738. 2011 Jun 1. [cited 2022 Feb 21]. Available from: <https://www.npaihb.org/download/policy/statepolicy/oregon/SB738.pdf> 2. Willamette Dental Group. Dental therapist pilot project: dental hygiene model. 2020 May 21 [cited 2022 Feb 21] Available from: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PREVENTIONWELLNESS/ORALHEALTH/DENTALPILOTPROJECTS/Documents/300-Abstract.pdf>

OBJECTIVE(S): To inform the progress of dental therapy pilot project #300 in Oregon. To explain the scope of practice of a dental therapist in Oregon. To discuss the future of dental therapy in the dental workforce by increasing access to dental care for the underserved community.
