



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

**Board of Dentistry**  
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## MEETING NOTICE

### **DENTAL ASSISTANT WORKFORCE SHORTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (DAWSAC)**

Oregon Board of Dentistry

ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION (not an in person meeting)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82908123440?pwd=faQFUwgJQ7r3eGlzqNv6ikva72Abd8.1>

Dial-In Phone #: 1-253-215-8782 • Meeting ID: 829 0812 3440 • Passcode: 509175

**July 17, 2024  
6 pm – 7:30 pm**

#### Committee Members:

Co-Chair, Ginny Jorgensen  
Co-Chair, Terrence Clark, DMD  
Amberena Fairlee, DMD - ODA Rep.  
Laura Vanderwerf, RDH - ODHA Rep.  
Jill Lomax - ODAA Rep.  
Kari Ann Kuntzelman, DT - DT Rep.

Lynn Murray  
Terri Dean  
Alexandria Case  
Jessica Andrews  
Gail Wilkerson  
Alyssa Kobylinsky  
Amanda Nash

#### **AGENDA**

Call to Order: Ginny Jorgensen, Chair

1. Review & Approve Minutes of May 15, 2024 DAWSAC Meeting
  - Meeting Minutes – **Attachment #1**
2. Review HB 3223 and information regarding formation of this Committee.
  - Information & HB 3223 – **Attachment #2**
3. Summary of DAWSAC work through first three meetings. Summary of work from the three previous DAWSAC Meetings. The committee has accomplished the following tasks: Shared ideas to address the shortage and personal anecdotes Provided helpful and interesting articles to give the group a greater basis and understanding of factors influencing the shortage Identified key areas they believe are influencing the shortage; including, but not limited to: rising dental assistant wages and inflation, lack of community resources promoting the profession, lack of awareness about the profession, recruitment and retention, making the profession more appealing, recruiting in high school and colleges.
4. Update from OBD Executive Director on what the OBD can do to support the DA workforce and address barriers to DA – **Attachment #3**
5. Financial Impact of Dental Assistants – **Attachment #4**

6. Lynn Murray email and attachment on financial support available – **Attachment #5**
7. Jill Lomax Proposal – **Attachment #6**
8. Alexandria Case Proposal – Enhancing Dental Care Through Mandatory Registration of Dental Assistants – **Attachment #7**
9. Jessica Andrews email and information– **Attachment #8**
10. Open Discussion on issues
11. Discuss dates of next DAWSAC meetings: November 13, 2024 and January 29, 2025

Open Comment - may be limited by the Chair due to time constraints as this meeting ends at 7:30 pm.

Adjourn

**OREGON BOARD OF DENTISTRY**  
**DENTAL ASSISTANT WORKFORCE SHORTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**(DAWSAC) Draft**  
**May 15, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Terrence Clark, DMD, Co-Chair  
Ginny Jorgensen, Co-Chair  
Amberena Fairlee, DMD - ODA Rep.  
Laura Vanderwerf, RDH - ODHA Rep.  
Jill Lomax - ODAA Rep.  
Kari Ann Kuntzelman, DT - DT Rep.  
Alexandria Case  
Alyssa Kobylinsky

STAFF PRESENT: Stephen Prisby, Executive Director  
Angela Smorra, DMD, Dental Director/Chief Investigator  
Haley Robinson, Office Manager  
Kathleen McNeal, Licensing Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Joanna Tucker-Davis, Sr. Assistant Attorney General

VISITORS PRESENT: Mary Harrison, ODAA; Brett Hamilton, ODA; Kristen Simmons, R.D.H.;  
IN PERSON & VIA Amanda Nash, Linda Kihs, Michael Le, Rachel B., Lisa Rowley – ODHA  
TELECONFERENCE\* Jill Boyd, Bill Pfunder

\*This list is not exhaustive, as it was not possible to verify all participants on the teleconference.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Chair Terrence Clark, DMD, welcomed everyone to the meeting and had the Members, Joanna Tucker-Davis, and Stephen Prisby introduce themselves.

#### **Self-Introductions of Committee Members**

Committee members introduced themselves and shared information about their history and current positions in the dental assisting field.

#### **Approval of February 23, 2024 Minutes**

Ms. Jorgensen moved and Ms. Lomax seconded that the Board approve the minutes from the February 23, 2024 Board Meeting as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Dental Assistants Performing Local Anesthesia**

The committee discussed that the request for dental assistants to perform local anesthesia is on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Licensing, Standards, and Competency Committee Meeting.

#### **Review HB 3223 and Identified Goals of the DAWSAC Committee**

May 15, 2024

DENTAL ASSISTANT WORKFORCE SHORTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Page 1 of 3

The committee discussed the intent of the committee and what they were charged with by the legislature. Ms. Jorgensen commented that it was important to review the bill and specifically address what the committee can provide to the Board in order to make a difference in the shortage. She noted that retention and interest in the profession were key items identified and asked the committee members for their input. Dr. Clark noted that it would be best to address those questions later in the meeting.

### **DAWSAC Packet Introduced**

#### **Pacific Dental Services (PDS) Dental Assistant Scholarship**

Michael M. Le, Executive Director for Pacific Dental Services discussed the scholarship provided to dental assistants to assist in the workforce shortage. Since its inception in 2016, PDS has awarded over 260 scholarships and over \$1.6 million in scholarships. 25 scholarships were given in OR thanks to partners such as Concorde Career Colleges, Carrington Colleges, and Clackamas Community College – Harmony. Partnering with Pacific Dental Services, recipients have opportunities to receive mentorship, network opportunities, training boot camps such as CAD/CAM, and externships with PDS's 15 dental offices in Oregon. Ms. Lomax thanked Mr. Le for encouraging the importance of elevating dental assisting as a career to make it more appealing to enter into the field.

The committee discussed different avenues of financial aid and scholarships available to dental assistants in Oregon. Ms. Jorgensen reported that the ODAA and ODA were working together to compile a list of scholarships and financial aid available to dental assistants.

#### **Oregon Health Care Provider Loan Repayment**

Jill Boyd discussed the Oregon Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program. She explained that it was expanding the program to include dental assistants and dental therapists. They also had scholarships available for dental assistants as well.

Jill Lomax also mentioned the Oregon Promise Grant that covers tuition to any Oregon community college for up to 90 credits for recent high school or GED graduates.

#### **DANB Perspectives on Dental Assisting Professional Requirements**

Ms. Jorgensen highlighted that 59% of dentists preferred to hire educated, credentialed dental assistants rather than training on the job. This pointed to elevating the profession as a good solution to the shortage and not removing education/examination requirements.

#### **Where Dental Staff Recruitment Stands in 2024**

The committee discussed the difficulties hiring dental hygienists and dental assistants. Dental assistants were getting "poached" due to being offered higher wages in other dental offices.

#### **Dental Assistants Performing Local Anesthesia**

The committee discussed that the request for dental assistants to perform local anesthesia is on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Licensing, Standards, and Competency Committee Meeting.

#### **Open Discussion**

The committee discussed meeting more frequently in order to provide the Board with recommendations. Mr. Prisby reported that it would be a resource issue for staff and the committee decided to extend the upcoming meetings to 1.5 hours.

Dr. Fairlee questioned the role of the Oregon Board of Dentistry and their capabilities to handle the workforce shortage issue.

Mr. Clark requested that the Board summarize the information from the past DAWSAC meetings and bring specific recommendations to the next meeting. Mr. Prisby reminded the Committee that it is the task of the DAWSAC to formulate and make recommendations to the Board and that the Board was the facilitating body for that action. Mr. Prisby stated he would address the request regarding what the Board could do to address the DA workforce shortage and reduce barriers to the profession at the July 17 meeting. A brief summary of past meeting would be provided as well.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m. Chair Clark stated that the next DAWSAC meeting would take place on July 17, 2024 at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

At the August 25, 2023 Board Meeting the Oregon Board of Dentistry (OBD) established a new standing Advisory Committee named the “Dental Assistant Workforce Shortage Advisory Committee (DAWSAC)” per ORS 679.280, to review, discuss and make recommendations to the Board on addressing workforce shortages in accordance with HB 3223 (2023).

The section of HB 3223 relevant to this is included for reference:

8        **SECTION 5. (1) The Oregon Board of Dentistry shall convene an advisory committee of**  
9        **at least seven members to study the dental assistant workforce shortage and to review the**  
10       **requirements for dental assistant certification in other states. The committee shall provide**  
11       **advice to the board on a quarterly basis on how to address the dental assistant workforce**  
12       **shortage in this state.**

13       **(2)(a) In appointing members to the advisory committee, the board shall prioritize di-**  
14       **versity of geographic representation, background, culture and experience.**

15       **(b) A majority of the members appointed to the committee must have experience working**  
16       **as dental assistants.**

17       **SECTION 6. This 2023 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2023**  
18       **regular session of the Eighty-second Legislative Assembly adjourns sine die.**

This advisory committee will meet no less than four times per calendar year once established, and generally be scheduled concurrently with regular OBD Board Meetings. The OBD President will designate two Co-Chairs of the Committee whom will be OBD Board Members. Preference will be given to Board Members who have past experience working as a dental assistant.

The advisory committee shall include five representatives from the Oregon dental assistant community who are currently or have worked as an Oregon dental assistant. The OBD President will select the members, and utilize the legislative criteria, if more than five people volunteer to serve on this advisory committee.

The advisory committee will also include one representative from each of the professional associations: The Oregon Dental Association, The Oregon Dental Hygienists’ Association and the Oregon Dental Assistants Association and eventually one from the Oregon Dental Therapy Association (should that be established).

The Advisory Committee members will bring relevant topics and agenda items to the meetings, be meaningfully engaged on the relevant issues, offer solutions and assist in gathering speakers, data and information.

The inaugural DAWSAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 27, 2023.

# Enrolled House Bill 3223

Sponsored by Representatives PHAM H, JAVADI, Senators GELSER BLOUIN, MANNING JR;  
Representative LEVY E, Senator CAMPOS

CHAPTER .....

AN ACT

Relating to dental assistants; and prescribing an effective date.

**Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

**SECTION 1. Section 2 of this 2023 Act is added to and made a part of ORS chapter 679.**

**SECTION 2. (1) In adopting rules related to the requirements for certification as a dental assistant, including any type of expanded function dental assistant, the Oregon Board of Dentistry may require an applicant for certification to pass a written examination. If passage of a written examination is required for certification as a dental assistant, including any type of expanded function dental assistant, the board may accept the results of any examination that is:**

**(a)(A) Administered by a dental education program in this state that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association, or its successor organization, and approved by the board by rule;**

**(B) Administered by a dental education program in this state that is approved by the Commission for Continuing Education Provider Recognition of the American Dental Association, or its successor organization, and approved by the board by rule; or**

**(C) An examination comparable to an examination described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of this paragraph that is administered by a testing agency approved by the board by rule; and**

**(b) Offered in plain language in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.**

**(2) The board may not require an applicant for certification as a dental assistant, including any type of expanded function dental assistant, to complete more than one written examination for certification as that type of dental assistant.**

**SECTION 3. Section 2 of this 2023 Act applies to applications for certification as a dental assistant, including any type of expanded function dental assistant, submitted on or after the operative date specified in section 4 of this 2023 Act.**

**SECTION 4. (1) Section 2 of this 2023 Act becomes operative on July 1, 2025.**

**(2) The Oregon Board of Dentistry may take any action before the operative date specified in subsection (1) of this section that is necessary to enable the board to exercise, on and after the operative date specified in subsection (1) of this section, all of the duties, functions and powers conferred on the board by section 2 of this 2023 Act.**

**SECTION 5. (1) The Oregon Board of Dentistry shall convene an advisory committee of at least seven members to study the dental assistant workforce shortage and to review the requirements for dental assistant certification in other states. The committee shall provide**

advice to the board on a quarterly basis on how to address the dental assistant workforce shortage in this state.

(2)(a) In appointing members to the advisory committee, the board shall prioritize diversity of geographic representation, background, culture and experience.

(b) A majority of the members appointed to the committee must have experience working as dental assistants.

SECTION 6. This 2023 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2023 regular session of the Eighty-second Legislative Assembly adjourns sine die.

Passed by House March 16, 2023

Received by Governor:

Repassed by House June 24, 2023

.....M.,....., 2023

Approved:

.....  
Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

.....M.,....., 2023

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Dan Rayfield, Speaker of House

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Tina Kotek, Governor

Passed by Senate June 24, 2023

Filed in Office of Secretary of State:

.....M.,....., 2023

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Rob Wagner, President of Senate

.....  
Secretary of State



**Information prepared for the July 17, 2024 DAWSAC Meeting by OBD Executive Director, Stephen Prisby. This information was requested by Chair Clark at the May 15, 2024 DAWSAC Meeting. These are general points of data, and the OBD welcomes discussion and recommendations from the DAWSAC to the OBD on what else it could consider to support and ameliorate the dental assistant workforce shortage in Oregon.**

## **How can the OBD support and grow the dental assistant workforce in Oregon?**

The OBD plays a role in supporting and growing the profession by ensuring high standards of practice, fostering professional development, and advocating for the profession's interests. Here are several ways the OBD could and does contribute:

1. **Setting Standards:** Licensing boards establish and uphold standards for education, training, and practice in the profession. They ensure that practitioners meet these requirements before they can practice, thus maintaining quality and safety in healthcare.
2. **Continuing Education Requirements:** Consider implementing continuing education requirements ensures that professionals stay up-to-date with the latest advancements and best practices in their field. The OBD can collaborate with educational institutions and professional organizations to offer relevant courses and training opportunities. Currently once a dental assistant earns a certification there is no expiration or renewal needed for that certificate
3. **Monitoring Compliance:** The OBD monitors compliance with regulations and professional standards. They investigate complaints and take disciplinary actions against practitioners who violate Dental Practice Act statutes or rules, thus protecting the public and upholding the reputation of the profession.
4. **Advocacy and Promotion:** Boards advocate for the interests of the profession, both within the healthcare industry and in the broader community. This could include promoting the value of the profession, advocating for favorable policies and regulations, and raising awareness about the contributions of all oral healthcare professionals to public health and well-being.
5. **Research and Innovation:** Supporting research and innovation within the profession helps advance knowledge and improve patient care. The OBD can support and promote research initiatives, collaborate with academic institutions, and encourage practitioners to participate in research activities.
6. **Collaboration and Networking:** Facilitating collaboration and networking among professionals fosters a sense of community and allows for the exchange of ideas and experiences. The OBD can promote conferences, seminars, and networking events

where professionals can connect with colleagues, share insights, and learn from each other.

7. **Public Education:** Educating the public about the profession's scope of practice, qualifications, and the importance of seeking care from licensed professionals can help build trust and confidence in the profession. The OBD can use its various channels, such as website, newsletters and informational campaigns, to disseminate accurate information to the oral healthcare community.

8. **Adapting to Changes:** Healthcare is constantly evolving, with new technologies, treatments, and challenges emerging regularly. The OBD needs to adapt to these changes by reviewing and updating regulations, standards, and practices to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

By fulfilling these roles effectively, health licensing boards can support the growth and development of the profession while safeguarding the interests of both practitioners and the public.

### **How can OBD reduce barriers to entry and grow the profession?**

Reducing barriers to entry and fostering growth within a profession are essential for ensuring a diverse, skilled, and dynamic workforce. The OBD could take measures to achieve these goals:

1. **Streamlining Processes:** Simplifying and expediting the certification process can make it easier for qualified individuals to enter the profession. This could involve reducing bureaucratic hurdles, streamlining application procedures, and providing clear guidance to applicants.

2. **Reciprocity and Certification Portability:** Implementing reciprocity agreements or other protocols with other jurisdictions and recognizing dental assistants from other states or countries can facilitate mobility for healthcare professionals.

3. **Alternative Pathways to Licensure:** Creating alternative pathways to certifications, such as internships, or competency-based assessments, can accommodate individuals with non-traditional backgrounds or experiences. This promotes diversity within the profession and increases access to opportunities for aspiring practitioners.

4. **Financial Support and Incentives:** Promote financial support, such as scholarships, grants, or loan forgiveness programs, can help alleviate the financial burden associated with education and training. Promote incentives, such as tax credits or reimbursement for school tuition or certification fees, can also encourage individuals to pursue careers in healthcare.

5. **Expanded Scope of Practice:** Reviewing and expanding the scope of practice for dental assistants can enable them to perform a broader range of services, thereby increasing their value and contribution to healthcare delivery. This may involve updating

the rules to reflect advances in technology, evidence-based practices, and changing healthcare needs.

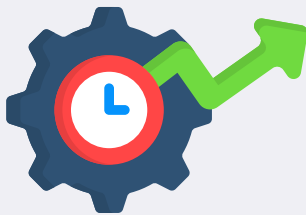
6. **Support for Continuing Education:** Providing support for continuing education and professional development initiatives helps practitioners stay current with evolving standards and advancements in their field. This may include offering or promoting continuing education credits or organizing training programs

7. **Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** Implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives within the profession can attract individuals from underrepresented groups and create a more inclusive workforce. This involves promoting diversity in recruitment, addressing systemic barriers, and fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all practitioners.

By implementing these strategies, health licensing boards can possibly help reduce barriers to entry, promote growth within the profession, and ensure a vibrant and diverse healthcare workforce capable of meeting the evolving needs of patients and communities.

# Financial Impact of Dental Assistants on the Dental Practice

New research reveals the tangible, financial value that dental assistants deliver.



Dental assistants make a meaningful impact on dental practice productivity.

**94%** of dental leaders believe dental assistants help improve patient retention.

Dental practices that support their dental assistants have improved bottom lines.

A survey of dental leaders found that dental practices that provided higher dental assistant wages also benefited from:

- Greater patient retention
- Higher dental assistant retention
- Increased estimated practice profitability



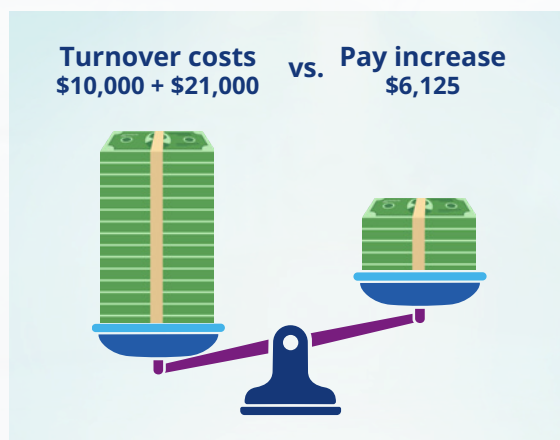
Increasing dental assistant pay will reap financial returns.

Reduce dental assistant turnover + Save hiring and training costs + Preserve at-risk revenue = **Gain cost savings and increased revenue**

Salary is a top job factor for dental assistants. Insufficient pay is the top reason for dental assistants' dissatisfaction at work and the number one reason assistants leave the profession. Increasing pay can increase retention while offsetting the costs of turnover — resulting in increased productivity and higher revenues.

**15%** increase in dental assistant pay (\$6,125 annually)\*

\*Based on a dental assistant earning \$23/hour, working a 35-hour week for 50 weeks, and receiving a \$3.50 raise



## Dental practices spend significant time and resources on hiring and training.

The average dental practice hires **3 dental assistants every 2 years**, either to fill a vacant role or to grow the team.

Dental practices spend approximately **5 months hiring and training** a new dental assistant.

It takes practices in rural settings **almost twice as long** to hire compared to practices in urban settings.



### Hiring and training to fill vacant dental assistant roles strains the dental team's productivity and efficiency.

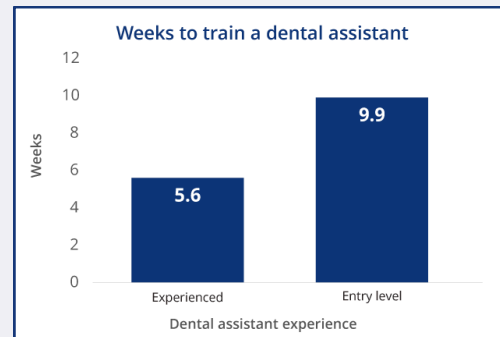
#### How long does it take to hire?

It takes an **average of 2.5 months** to fill the position. Rural and specialty practices take longer to hire than urban and general dental practices.



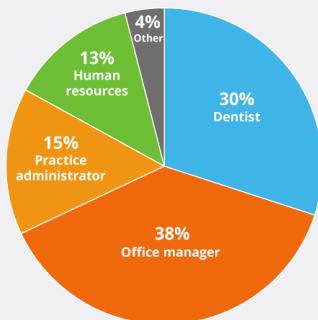
#### How long does it take to train?

An **average of 1 to 2.5 months** is spent training new hires. Entry-level dental assistants require more training than experienced assistants.



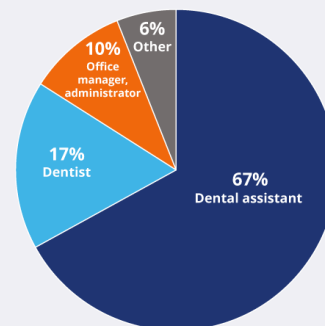
#### Who is responsible for hiring?

**Dentists' and office managers'** time is devoted to hiring the new dental assistant.



#### Who is responsible for training?

**Dental assistants** are often responsible for training a new dental assistant.





The cost of dental assistant turnover affects the dental practice for months.

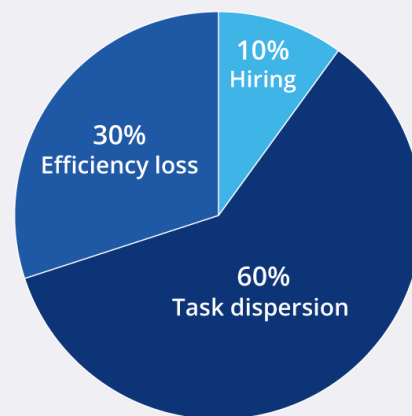
### Cost of dental assistant turnover

**\$10,000** (25% of the dental assistant’s annual pay)



Expenses related to dental assistant turnover and unfilled positions are cumulative and include the **direct costs** of advertising and recruiting, as well as **indirect costs** such as training and orientation, loss of productivity, and reduced patient volume.

Turnover cost breakdown



### At-risk revenue

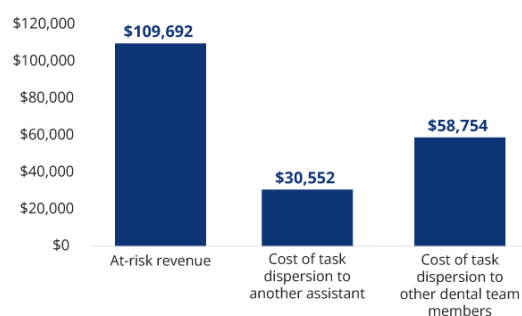
**\$21,000** (1.2% of the practice’s annual revenue)

### Costs per year

There are numerous financial costs to vacant dental assistant positions, and hiring to fill open roles is even more challenging now due to the ongoing shortage of qualified dental assistants.

If the dental practice had an open dental assistant position for a full year, it could potentially incur even greater costs and lose out on significant revenues.

Annual costs of dental assistant vacancies



*Note: Cost of turnover is based on a dental assistant earning \$40,000/year. At-risk revenue is based on practice revenue of \$1.8 million and the dental assistant position being vacant for 10 weeks. Costs of task dispersion represent the additional costs beyond the wages that would have been paid to the dental assistant, if the position were filled.*



## Dental practices are negatively impacted financially by dental assistant vacancies.

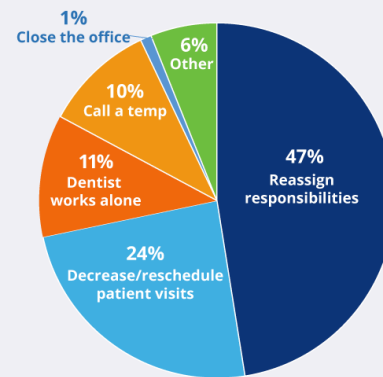
### When the dental assistant is out of the office, practices adjust schedules and responsibilities.

**1 in 4** dental practices decrease or reschedule patient visits. As a result, dental practices experience a **6% decrease in average daily revenue**.

For public clinics, the impact is more significant, with **almost half** decreasing or rescheduling patient visits.

**1 in 2** dental practices reassign the dental assistants' responsibilities, which leads to a **76% increase in daily cost** for the practice.

Adjusted schedules and responsibilities

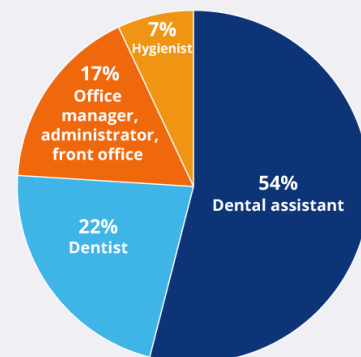


### Other team members take on more tasks when a dental assistant role is vacant.

**More than half** of reassigned tasks are delegated to **another dental assistant**.

**About one-quarter** of reassigned tasks are taken on by the **dentist**, the role with the **highest labor cost**.

Delegation of dental assistant duties



#### About the research

The Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) and the DALE Foundation conducted this research project with consulting firm Global Skills X-Change. The survey was distributed in December 2023 through several partner organizations, including the American Association of Dental Office Management, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the National Network for Oral Health Access, and other contact lists.

Survey respondents included dentists, dental office managers, and dental practice administrators from every U.S. state, including urban and rural regions. Respondents also represented a mix of general and specialty practices, as well as private practices, dental support organizations (DSOs), and nonprofit/public clinics. More than 560 responses were received and analyzed, with a 95% confidence level and 5-6% margin of error.

**From:** Lynn Murray <[lmurray@cocc.edu](mailto:lmurray@cocc.edu)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 21, 2024 9:35 AM

**To:** PRISBY Stephen \* OBD <[Stephen.PRISBY@obd.oregon.gov](mailto:Stephen.PRISBY@obd.oregon.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Next DAWSAC Meeting July 17 from 6 pm - 7:30 pm via ZOOM

Hi Stephen,

I was told that the Board would like a list of available funding sources for those who would like to attend a CODA Accredited Dental Assisting program. Here is what I was able to come up with from Federal, local and State offerings. Some may be different at other colleges, but it gives a pretty good idea of what is available to students. The number and variety of funding sources shows a DA program is an extremely viable option for students. Many of our student attend the program at no cost to themselves.

Thank you,

Lynn

*Lynn Murray*, M.Ed., CDA, EFDA-RF, CPFDA, MADAA

Central Oregon Community College

Dental Assisting Program Director

Professor of Dental Assisting

Dental Clinic Manager

[lmurray@cocc.edu](mailto:lmurray@cocc.edu)

541 383-7574



## Student Educational Funding Options to Attend Dental Assisting Programs

### Financial Assistance for Pre-requisite Coursework Only

**College Now** – Dual credit with HS, approved teachers teach HS students in HS for college credit. Students connect with HS counselor and pay \$25 per credit, during academic year.

**Expanded Options** – Concurrent enrollment, students are determined by HS counselor to qualify. They take college classes on college campus, and HS classes at their HS. HS pays for college tuition, during academic year, full funding for pre-requisite courses.

**Summer Bridge Program** – Jefferson County, Madras HS only. HS pays for students to take college classes during the summer in Madras, Oregon. Full funding for pre-requisite courses.

### Grants For All Or Part Of Dental Assisting Program Completion

**Oregon State Grants** – Most grants are offered on the basis of financial need. Grants do not have to be repaid and are a type of gift aid. Dept. of Education, State of Oregon. Amount varies dependent upon eligibility and available funds, can offer full funding for program.

**Federal Pell Grant** – The Federal Pell Grant program was established to provide financial aid for eligible undergraduate students with financial need. Can offer full funding for program.

**Oregon Opportunity Grant** – The state of Oregon provides funds for this grant program. Eligibility is based on financial need. Based on student's eligibility and State Budget. Can offer full funding for program.

**Federal Work-Study** - The federal Work-Study program provides jobs for students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. These funds can be used with other financial offerings. Partial funding for pre-requisites and DA program.

**Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)** – College is responsible for selecting eligible students and determining the amount of the aid offer. Award is \$600 and can be used with other financial aid offerings. Partial funding for program.

**VA Educational Benefits** – Students who are Veteran's can apply for benefits. GI bill and others. Can pay full funding for program.

### Scholarships for All or Part Of Dental Assisting Program Completion

**Scholarships** – There are many scholarships available from a variety of sources. They pay all or part of educational expenses depending upon eligibility and available funds. Students can have more than one scholarship which added pay all college expenses. Some are listed below.

#### **State of Oregon Scholarships:**

- **Ford Family Foundation**
- **Office of Student Access and Completion**

- Oregon Community Foundation
- Oregon Goes to College
- Oregon Promise (Oregon students have free tuition for 2 years to complete program)
- Oregon National Guard Charitable Education Fund Scholarship
- Oregon National Guard State Tuition Assistance STEP/PTO funding
- Oregon School Employee Association
- Oregon Tribal Student Grant
- OSAC Scholarships (one application allows students to apply for multiple scholarships)
- Vocational Rehab Scholarship (pays all or part of education)

**Federal Scholarships:**

- Federal Student Aid
- Scholly by Sallie

**Local Scholarships: Some Central Oregon Examples:**

- COIC/WorkSource Scholarship
- COCC Foundation Scholarship (pays all or part of students' education)
- Healthy Rural Oregon
- COCC Merit Scholarship

**Undocumented Student Scholarships:**

- Undocumented Student Relief Fund
- COCC Latinx Scholarship Fund
- Central Oregon Latino Scholarship
- Educators for Fair Consideration
- TEF & LGG Scholarship
- National Counsel of La Raza
- Hispanic Scholarship Fund

Low interest Student Loans for those who needs additional funding or does not qualify for any of the above.

## **Reverse HB 3223: A Proposal Presented to the Oregon Board of Dentistry Dental Assistant Workforce Shortage Advisory Committee (DAWSAC)**

**Submitted by: Jill Lomax, EdM, CDA, EFDA-RF**

**Background:** Dental assistants in Oregon are governed by rules and not statutes. HB 3223 is a statute that bypasses and removes the Oregon Board of Dentistry's authority and expertise over dental assistants in Oregon. Although HB 3223 was approved by lawmakers, many concerns have been brought forward regarding the logistics of HB 3223 by those in the dental profession. Per HB 3223 Section 4-2, "The Oregon Board of Dentistry may take any action before the operative date specified in subsection (1) of this section that is necessary to enable the board to exercise, on and after the operative date specified in subsection (1) of this section, all of the duties, functions and powers conferred on the board by section 2 of this 2023 Act."

**Proposal:** I propose that the DAWSAC recommend to the Oregon Board of Dentistry (OBD) to reverse HB 3223

### **Points to consider:**

- **Workforce Issue.** As the DAWSAC committee has discussed, the workforce is not an exam issue, it is a pipeline and retention issue. Lowering the exam standard will not fix the problem, thus, HB 3223 should be reversed.
- **Dental Assistants can currently assist without taking an exam.** Non-EFDA dental assistants in Oregon do not need to take an exam to assist a dentist, thus, changing the exam process will not increase the number of dental assistants or access-to-care. An exam is required to take radiographs and/or perform the nine (9) EFDA duties as outline in Division 42.
- **Oregon candidates' RHS exam pass rate is high.** Per DANB, Oregon candidates consistently pass the RHS exam at a higher rate than the national average. For the period from January 2019 through October 2022, the percentage of Oregon candidates who passed the exam on the first or second attempt was 82%.
- **Exams are accessible and available remotely.** Candidates may take DANB's exams at any one of more than 250 computerized testing sites nationwide (including six locations in Oregon) six days per week during regular business hours. As of January 2021, candidates may also take the exam at home or another remote location of their choice through online remote proctoring, with appointments available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Future Division 42 changes.** Any changes to the dental assisting rules should go through the Oregon Board of Dentistry, not legislation.

### **Additional Rationale:**

**Reason #1:** HB 3223 lowers the exam standard for dental assistants by allowing exams to be created by entities who are ADA CERP recognized continuing education providers. ADA CERP recognition status does not validate an organization's expertise of creating psychometrically valid examinations.

Currently, 37 states and D.C. require or recognize DANB exams at some level to ensure that applicants meet a *minimum* national standard for knowledge-based competency critical to the health and safety of patients and dental healthcare personnel. All DANB questions are reviewed and updated regularly by a range of subject matter experts and are reviewed for validity and reliability. Lowering the standard has the potential to make the workforce crises worse, among other factors. The 13 states who do not require DANB exams still have a dental assisting workforce crisis.

*Questions for the board to consider:*

1. How will the OBD determine the validity of dental assisting exams and exam questions submitted for approval?
2. Will the OBD hire subject matter experts and a psychometrician to handle this analysis?

**Reason #2:** HB 3223 requires exams to be “offered in plain language in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese”. At the time HB 3223 was introduced, DANB was already progressively working on offering certification exams in Spanish. In comparison, dental hygiene and dental school exams are only available in English.

*Questions for the board to consider:*

1. How will the OBD verify the translation of exams in Spanish and Vietnamese?
2. Will there be a cost involved to OBD related to the translation of exams into Spanish or Vietnamese?
3. Will there be enough Vietnamese exam takers to ensure exam validity and reliability?
4. How is “plain” language being assessed?

**Reason #3:** HB 3223 allows an exam to be “Administered by a dental education program in this state that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association, or its successor organization”.

*Questions for the board to consider:*

1. Since this is not specific to dental assisting programs, does this mean a dental hygiene or dental school could administer ODB dental assisting exams?
2. What is the definition of “successor organization” and how would OBD ensure that the successor organization maintains CODA Accreditation?
3. How will the OBD prevent instructors from CODA Accredited programs from informing their students what is on the exam that they themselves created?
4. How will CODA Accredited programs inform the OBD that the applicant has passed the exam?
5. Will there be a cost to OBD to process applications from a non-DANB exam provider?

**Reason #4:** HB 3223 allows any dental education program that is an ADA CERP recognized continuing education provider to administer an exam. The CERP recognition process does not evaluate for expertise in exam creation, management, or psychometrics. According to the ADA, to be eligible for ADA CERP recognition, a provider must:

- Develop and present CE on a regular basis, and have planned, implemented and evaluated at least one CE activity in the last 12 months;
- Operate under the oversight of an independent CE advisory committee;
- Offer courses that are based in accepted science;
- Not be a commercial interest, as defined by ADA CERP.

This could potentially allow non-accredited dental assisting programs to test their own students. A dental educator in a non-accredited program is not required to have test creation or educational methodology.

*Questions for the board to consider:*

1. How will the OBD prevent instructors from ADA CERP recognized organizations from informing their students what is on the exam that they themselves created?
2. How will ADA CERP recognized providers inform the OBD that the applicant has passed the exam?
3. Will there be a cost to OBD to process applications from a non-DANB exam provider?

**Reason #5:** HB 3223 states that “The board may not require an applicant for certification as a dental assistant, including any type of expanded function dental assistant, to complete more than one written examination for certification as that type of dental assistant.”

*Questions for the board to consider:*

1. What does this mean for an applicant who wants to get certified in multiple disciplines? For an example, will the board need to approve of individual exams for each of the following?
  - a. If an applicant wants to become radiology and EFDA certified
  - b. If an applicant wants to become radiology and EFODA certified
  - c. If an applicant wants to become radiology, EFDA, and EFODA certified
  - d. And so on...

Thank you for your consideration,

Jill Lomax, EdM, CDA, EFDA-RF



# ENHANCING DENTAL CARE THROUGH MANDATORY REGISTRATION OF DENTAL ASSISTANTS

A PROPOSAL PRESENTED TO THE OREGON BOARD OF DENTISTRY DAWSAC COMMITTEE

PRESENTED BY ALEXANDRIA CASE

JULY 2024

# INTRODUCTION

**Objective:**

To improve retention rates for dental assistants and make it a more attractive career path by implementing mandatory state registration and continuing education.



# FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CAREER SPAN

## **Job satisfaction and work environment**

- Higher pay and better working conditions lead to longer career spans.

## **Certification and Continuing Education**

- Ongoing professional development leads to longer careers due to a higher level of responsibility and job satisfaction.

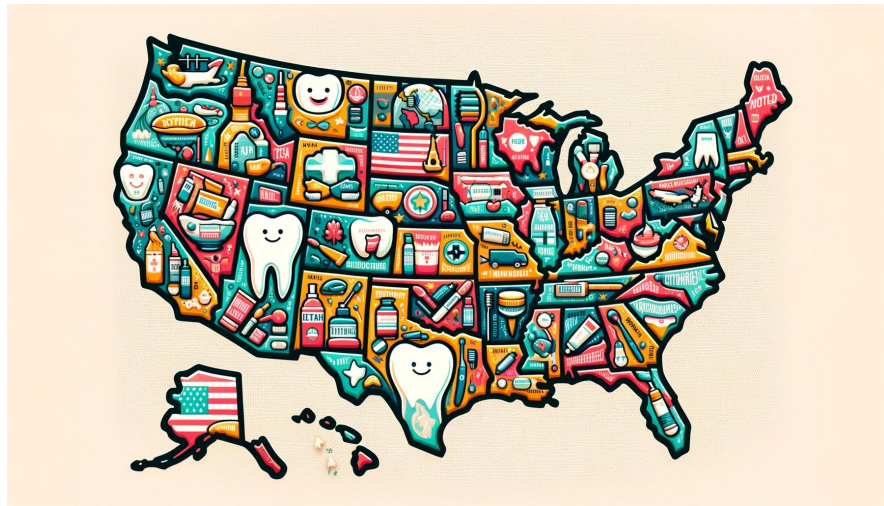
## **Physical Demands**

- States with fewer regulations to protect and regulate DAs have been shown to have more health issues and burnout.





# CURRENT LANDSCAPE



- Dental assistants in Oregon are **not required** to be registered with the state dental board or any other entity.
- Dental assistants who obtain their DANB RHS and EFDA have a one-time requirement to show the Oregon Board of Dentistry; no CE is needed to continue.
- If an assistant in Oregon has their CDA or higher through DANB, they must be registered with DANB and keep up with continuing education credits yearly.
- OTJ trained or those who graduated from a non-accredited program do not require an continuing education hours. It is only required if a DA has their CDA, which Oregon does not require. **This is 2/3 of the current Oregon's current DA workforce.**

# BENEFITS OF STATE REGISTRATION



- **Improved Patient Safety:** States with registration requirements saw a 25% reduction in procedural errors and a 30% increase in adherence to safety protocols and infection control procedures. (ADA News)
- **Enhanced Professional Development:** Data from CODA shows that 85% of DAs in registered states pursued continuing education opportunities, compared to 60% without registration requirements. (CODA Survey)
- **Skill Advancement:** Registered DAs were more likely to advance their skills and take on expanded functions within dental practices, leading to a more skilled workforce. (CODA Survey)
- **Practice Efficiency:** Highlight Data from CODA showed a 20% improvement in appointment scheduling and time management, along with a 10% increase in practice revenue with registration requirements. (ADA News)
- **Quality of Care & Professional Standards:** Required registration for all DAs will help guarantee that DAs operate within their designated scope of practice, enhancing patient safety and the overall effectiveness of dental care services.
- **Reporting & Communication:** To accurately represent the current dental assistants (DAs) in the workforce and maintain effective communication, the board should ensure that all DAs are registered with the state. This will facilitate the board's ability to contact them for announcements, updates, questions, surveys, and any necessary remediation efforts.
- **Access to Care:** States with required registration saw a 15% increase in dental assistants working in underserved and rural areas. There was a 25% rise in community dental health programs involving registered DAs. (Report Pew Charitable Trusts)

# CASE STUDIES



## California

- Required mandatory DA certification and maintain CE

- Improved pt safety: 25% reduction in procedural errors
- Higher Quality of Care: 20% improvement in patient satisfaction scores

- (California Dental Association Journal, 2018)



## Minnesota

- Mandated DA complete accredited program or pass state or national exam

- Safety standards: 40% higher compliance rate
- Improved pt outcomes: 20% improvement in patient satisfaction scores

- (Minnesota Dental Association Journal, 2019)



## New York

- Required DA to be registered and maintain CE

- Enhanced Preventative care: 30% more preventative care services (fluoride, sealants)
- Decreased Radiographic Errors: 20% reduction in radiographic errors, resulting in more accurate diagnoses and tx.

- (New York State Dental Journal, 2020)



## Oregon

- Required DA to pass DANB RHS to take radiographs.

- 30% decrease in infection rates in dental clinics
- 15% increase in clinical efficiency, allowing more pts to be seen without compromising the quality of care.

- (OHA, 2017, Oregon Dental Association Journal, 2017)

COMPARISON	Nail Techs	Dental Assistants
Public Health and Safety: Exposure Risks	Close proximity with clients skin and nails	Close proximity to pt oral cavities, handling instruments, direct contact with bodily fluids. High risk of transmitting infections if proper procedures aren't followed
Public Health and Safety: Standardize Sanitation Practices	Adhere to rigorous sanitation practices to prevent fungal and bacterial infections	Adhere to rigorous sanitation practices and regulations to prevent more serious infections like hepatitis or HIV
Professional Training and Competence: Structured training Programs	States require proof of professional training and passing a licensing exam. This ensures that only qualified individuals practice, which safeguards public welfare.	Currently, no state-required form or forms of training are required with the exception of the RHS exam
Professional Training and Competence: Continuous Education	Ongoing education is required to maintain registration	Currently, only if someone is certified through DANB as a CDA or higher are they required to maintain a specific number of hours per year of CE.
Consumer Confidence and Trust: Public Assurance	Current registration signals to the public that a professional meets certain standards. Showing the individuals are registered and compliant with state regulations	Currently, none in place for DA's unless they have their RHS DANB through via State of Oregon
Consumer Confidence and Trust: Transparency and Accountability	Registered professionals typically listed in a public database, allowing consumers to verify credentials and file complaints if standards are not met.	Currently, none in place
Regulatory Consistency:	Required to register in nearly every state to create a consistent standard	Currently, none in place
Legal and Ethical Implications: Professional Liability	State boards define what services can be legally provided, helping delineate clear scopes of practice, reducing the risk of malpractice.	Currently, OBD does delineate which DA functions are within the scope of practice, but no regulations on these in place or remediation.

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- **All dental assistants in Oregon must be registered with the Oregon Board of Dentistry.**
  - No matter if they learned “on the job” or through an accredited or unaccredited program. No matter what certifications they hold or if they are already registered with DANB or any other entity.
- **Each renewal cycle is required to be every two years.**
  - Charge \$20-\$40 per renewal cycle
- **Require updated BLS card plus 20 CE hours every two years, with some of those credits being Infection Control, BLS/CPR, Cultural Competence**

# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

## Implementation Planning

- Work with the Oregon Board of Dentistry to develop the regulations and administrative procedures
- Oregon Board of Dentistry to additional position to take on this role (paid for through yearly fees)

## Education and Communication

- Collaborate with DA programs with new registration requirements
- Launch an information campaign to educate DA and their employers about the new requirements, deadlines, and processes
- Provide detailed guides and FAQs to assist in the transition

## Evaluation and Adjustment

- After implementation, continuously monitor the outcomes to ensure objectives are being met
- Create mechanisms for ongoing feedback to address any issues or unintended consequences

## Review and Continuous Improvement

- Regularly review the registration process and standards to ensure they remain relevant and effective
- Prepare to make adjustments in response to new developments in dental practices or in response to stakeholder feedback.



# CONCLUSION

WHY SHOULD DENTAL ASSISTANTS BE ANY DIFFERENT?

**From:** Andrews, Jessica <[HooklandJ@InterDent.com](mailto:HooklandJ@InterDent.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 2, 2024 2:41 PM  
**To:** PRISBY Stephen \* OBD <[Stephen.PRISBY@obd.oregon.gov](mailto:Stephen.PRISBY@obd.oregon.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: DAWSAC Meeting July 17 at 6 pm Via Zoom

Hello Stephen,

I wanted to share that Willamette Career Academy in Salem has added a Dental Science Program to their facility and are currently building the space. I have accepted the position of instructor and I am pleased to say that we have 30 high school students currently interested in the program. The program will introduce students to dental assisting, but it is called the Dental Sciences program because we also want to support students who become interested in dental hygiene, dentures or dentistry by giving them information on pursuing careers in those roles as well.

The program will be 2 years long for juniors and seniors from surrounding high schools. The ribbon cutting ceremony is at WCA on August 29th. Alan Kirby, the Principal, has offered to join our next meeting if we decide to discuss the program during that time to field any questions if anyone has any.

I have attached a flier that Mr. Kirby has been circulating to get this info out. Let me know if you would like him to join us. I am still new to the Academy and will have limited knowledge on the funding, process, etc. We are excited to have such a healthy interest from students in the dental field!

Thank you,

Jessie Andrews  
Dental Assisting Program Manager  
[hooklandj@interdent.com](mailto:hooklandj@interdent.com)





## **Dental Science at Willamette Career Academy**

The Willamette Career Academy (WCA) Dental Science Program will introduce students to a workplace environment in the field of dentistry. In this two-year hands-on program, students will learn about dental anatomy and physiology, how to take dental radiographs, patient record keeping, assisting with procedures, and more. Students will have the opportunity to leave WCA with the knowledge and experience needed to take the required assessments that will allow them to go directly to work as dental assistants.

With the help of industry partner DCI and an Oregon Department of Education (ODE) grant, WCA will adapt the existing space to create a state-of-the-art facility with seven learning stations, a lab for making impressions, and a classroom space. A dedicated teacher will be hired as well as a teaching assistant to facilitate the program.

The goal of the dental program will be to prepare students for a clear path to employment in the dental field immediately following high school, or to further students' dental education.

### **Year One Projected Outline | On Site at WCA**

- Dental Anatomy
- \*Infection Control (ICE)
- \*Basic Life Support Certification(BLS)
- Clinical Skills Practice
- Dental Materials
- Dental Specialties
- Office Management
- Radiography (Digital x-ray) Students will learn how to do these on site, and eventually be certified by a dentist/hygienist that they are proficient (year 2).

### **Year Two Projected Outline | Completed on-site at WCA and in clinical placements**

- \*Radiography (RHS) (continued)
- Dental Materials (continued)
- Practicum/Expanded Functions (EFDA). Students will be able to learn and practice these hands-on skills, for the most part, at the WCA. They will then spend time “ in the field” with dentists/in offices completing competencies in these skills, and we are building partnerships in the area to give students this opportunity.

*\*Denotes required assessment/proficiency for Dental Assisting in Oregon*

