



## Washington State Legislature

December 9, 2019

Tom Lux, Chair  
Shoreline Community College Board of Trustees  
16101 Greenwood Ave N  
Shoreline, WA 98133

Re: Dental Hygiene Program

Dear Chair Lux:

Shoreline Community College stands as an integral part of the Shoreline community and the 32<sup>nd</sup> legislative district. As legislators representing this district, we are proud of the superior education opportunities Shoreline Community College offers thousands of students each year. Thus, we are extremely concerned about the potential closure of the Shoreline Community College Dental Hygiene Program.

Shoreline's Dental Hygiene Program was founded in 1969, celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, along with the entire college. It is a mature, developed program that provides educational opportunities and high quality, affordable dental services to patients from within and outside the local community.

The Shoreline Dental Hygiene program is highly respected because of the quality of the dental hygienists produced. In fact, its annual outreach project to Bolivia was recognized for its efforts with the 2013 Andrew Hieskell Award for Innovation in International Education. Currently, 47 students are enrolled in the 7 quarter Dental Hygiene Program, with an additional 20 faculty and staff positions. Closing the program will clearly put these students and staff at risk.

The need for dental hygienists in our state is at an all-time high. Eliminating one of the dental hygiene programs in our state will have a direct effect on dentists and the patient capacity that most dental offices have every year. If a dental office is open at least four days a week, one dental hygienist is seeing about 32 patients a week, with an estimated 128 patients a month, and about 768 patients every 6 months for recall cleanings. For a class of 24 students, the estimated total amount of patients that would be seen every 6 months would be about 18,000. As you can see, losing a class of 24 students has a far-reaching impact on dentistry in our state.

Also important to note is the impact on the community at large. The Shoreline Dental Hygiene Clinic plays a vital role in delivering oral health care to patients who

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have no other access to care. The clinic has over 13,000 patients in their system, with 2600 patients treated in 2018. 858 of those patients were new patients. 97% of these patients do not have dental insurance.

As you know, Shoreline Community College's original pre-design plans for a new Allied Health Sciences building included the Dental Hygiene Program and clinic. In the spring of 2019, however, a new design plan was developed without the program and clinic.

In an effort to retain the program, Shoreline Community College explored the use of student-funded space as a temporary home for the program. However, contractual issues prevented the viability of this option. This was not communicated to the Dental Hygiene program until October 2019. No new location for the Dental Hygiene Program and clinic has been identified as of last month.

To make matters worse, Building #2500, the current home of the Dental Hygiene Program and clinic, is proposed to be demolished by July 1, 2020. The cited reason is that new permit requirements for the City of Shoreline become effective on July 1, 2020. However, we suggest that Shoreline Community College request a variance from these new permit requirements, so that the building can remain in place while a thoughtful solution can be achieved to retain the Dental Hygiene Program.

Closing the Dental Hygiene Program and clinic would have a devastating effect not only on the affected dental hygiene students and faculty, but Shoreline Community College and the community as a whole.

We ask that the Shoreline Board of Trustees work with the Dental Hygiene Program faculty, interested oral health care stakeholders, and us to find a solution that will allow the Dental Hygiene Program and clinic to remain open. We also ask that you defer demolition of Building #2500 until this solution is found.

Sincerely,



Representative Cindy Ryu



Representative Lauren Davis



Senator Jesse Salomon

cc: Sen. Annette Cleveland, Chair of Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee  
Rep. Eileen Cody, Chair of House Health Care & Wellness Committee  
Sen. Christine Rolfes, Chair of Senate Ways & Means Committee  
Rep. Steve Tharinger, Chair of House Capital Budget Committee  
Sen. Emily Randall, Chair of Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee  
Rep. Drew Hansen, Chair of College & Workforce Development Committee

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Will Hall, Mayor of Shoreline  
Doris McConnell, Deputy Mayor of Shoreline  
Susan Chang, Shoreline City Council  
Keith McGlashan, Shoreline City Council  
Chris Roberts, Shoreline City Council  
Betsy Robertson, Shoreline City Council  
Keith Scully, Shoreline City Council