



Connecticut State Dental Association

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Legislative Testimony HB 7069 AAC Access To Oral Health Care Public Health Committee, Monday, March 5, 2007 Carol J. Dingeldey, Executive Director

Representative Sayers, Senator Handley and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Carol Dingeldey and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut State Dental Association. Thank you for giving me the opportunity today to provide some information for your consideration regarding proposed Bill HB 7069 *An Act Concerning Access to Oral Health Care*.

The Connecticut State Dental Association is committed to being a part of the solution to the challenges children in the state face regarding access to oral health care. The Association recently conducted a survey of our membership regarding their current and future participation as HUSKY providers. The results were very exciting. 300 dentists who currently do not participate in HUSKY indicated that they would, if the reimbursement rates were increased to the 70th percentile. When asked the same question, an additional 89 dentists, who currently participate, indicated that they would accept more patients.

Clearly, individual dentists are willing to be active providers of care to children in the HUSKY program if the reimbursement rates are increased to the 70th percentile.

My focus today, however, is to provide you with an understanding of the CSDA's dedication to improving access to oral healthcare for children enrolled in the Husky program.

The CSDA House of Delegates met on February 7, 2007, and made the following commitments:

- On the condition that the HUSKY and all other state funded dental programs that are based upon Medicaid fees are increased and maintained at the 70th percentile of fees charged by CT dentists, the CSDA is **committed to recruiting additional members as providers in the state funded dental programs. Furthermore, recognizing that a significant increase in the number of providers will strain the credentialing process, the CSDA is committed to charging a CSDA**

employee with facilitating education, recruitment, and credentialing of prospective new providers.

- Recognizing that the “safety-net” dental facilities across the state are critical to providing dental services to HUSKY enrollees, the CSDA will **convene a working group** of representatives from these “safety net” dental facilities, such as community health centers, school-based dental services, hospital-based dental services, etc. to plan a symposium to address effective utilization of safety net facilities in providing dental care.

The goal of this symposium would be to **improve the efficiency and effectiveness** of these safety net facilities to better address their mission of providing care to the uninsured, underinsured, and Medicaid insured populations of CT. The CSDA is committed to coordinating the administrative activities of the working group, and to **sharing the financial support for this symposium with other partners at a CSDA cost up to \$10,000.**

- In addition, the CSDA will form an ad hoc committee that will work with the CT State Medical Society and the CT Association of Pediatricians to develop and submit to the state Department of Education an **oral health curriculum** to be incorporated in the “Healthy and Balanced Living Framework.” The intended outcome of this activity is to add an oral health component to the concept of the “medical home”.
- In a similar vein, the CSDA work on a national level through the American Dental Association to develop an **oral health curriculum for use in school systems nationwide.** We hope to impress upon our children the value and importance of good oral health and hygiene over their entire life time.

Increasing dental reimbursement rates to the 70th percentile as called for in HB 7069 is a very important first step on the journey to providing oral health care to children enrolled in the Husky program. The dentists in the state of Connecticut are ready to participate, and the Connecticut State Dental Association is eager to assist.

On behalf of the 2,500 member dentists of the Connecticut State Dental Association, I thank you the opportunity to provide these comments.