Danbury Public School
Oral Health Initiative
63 Beaver Brook Road
Danbury, CT 0681-6211

Phone (203) 790-2812
Fax (203) 790-2612

March 1, 2007

Dear Public Health Committee,

My name is Kim Doan, Project Manager for the Danbury Public School Oral Health Collaborative and the Coordinator of Dental Services for the Danbury Public School's School Based Dental Program. I am writing in support of Bill HB 7069, to increase HUSKY dental reimbursement rates to the 70th percentile.

The Danbury Community Oral Health Initiative Collaborative is composed of a committed group representing a spectrum of local health and social service directors and providers (i.e. local dental providers and pediatricians, Head Start, WIC, Visiting Nurses Association, Community Health Center, Danbury Public School) who came together in response to the alarming number of children in the Danbury schools experiencing pain due to preventable and treatable oral health disease. The mission of the oral health collaborative is to increase the number of HUSKY children receiving dental treatment through a seamless integrated system of care comprised of a mobile school-based dental program, and the participation of local safety net providers.

According to report published by the Connecticut Health Foundation, HUSKY children have the lowest dental utilization rate among the six New England states. Over the past several years in Connecticut, 2 out of every 3 HUSKY children have failed to receive dental care. In the Danbury community, less than 10 percent of private sector dentists treat HUSKY children. Four years ago, there was one HUSKY dental group that provided general dental care for the entire City of Danbury. for the Up until this year, our school based program was the only clinic in the City of Danbury to provides preventive and restorative dental treatment services to HUSKY children enrolled in all 4 of the HUSKY Managed Care Organizations.

A community dental needs assessment conducted by the Danbury Oral Health Initiative found the primary reason for the lower numbers of HUSKY children receiving any dental treatment is due to lack of HUSKY dental providers in the area. The principal reason for lack of provider participation is due to the low reimbursement rates which wouldn't even be enough to cover the cost for supplies to provide restorative treatment care. However, there are several dentists within the community who have stated that they would seriously consider becoming HUSKY dental providers with the passing and implementation of HB 7069.

The DOHI's school based dental program was initially funded with a start up grant and is slated to expire in 2007, at which time the sustainability of the school based dental program will be heavily reliant on HUSKY dental reimbursement for services provided. Currently, the reimbursement rate does not cover overhead of treatment and services. With the passing and implementation of HB 7069 that would increase HUSKY dental reimbursement rates for children to the 70th percentile would be the most critical component enacted in support of community dental programs, such as our school based clinics which predominately rely on HUSKY dental service reimbursement, and remains the key factor for a financial sustainability. Our school based program provides much needed preventive and restorative treatment services to Head Start students, WIC, the children in foster care, the homeless and other under served populations within and throughout our surrounding communities. Please, I urge you to support HB 7069.

Sincerely,

Kim Doan, Coordinator of Dental Services
Danbury Public School Oral Health Initiative