



Connecticut State Dental Association

835 West Queen Street
Southington, CT 06489

860.378.1800 / phone
860.378.1807 / fax

CSDA.com

**Legislative Testimony
HB-7069 An Act Concerning Access to Oral Health Care
Public Health Committee, March 5, 2007
Dr. Stephanie A. Urillo, DDS
Board of Governors, Connecticut State Dental Association**

Good afternoon, Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Dr. Stephanie Urillo, and I am a member of the Board of Governors of the Connecticut State Dental Association, serving District III, which is central Connecticut. Thank-you for the opportunity to speak on HB-7069, an act concerning access to oral health care.

I would like to applaud Representative Sayers for introducing this legislation, the time for which is long overdue. Connecticut is a very wealthy state. Fees for reimbursement for dental procedures have not increased for children since 1993, and for adults since 1989. Costs of providing these services during this time have skyrocketed. This is a travesty, especially when you consider that taxi drivers and translators for these patients get their entire fee paid in full! Dental treatment requires many materials, the majority of which are one-use materials, and the large majority of which are disposable, for sanitary purposes. There is a fixed cost associated with purchasing each of these materials.

This bill is seeking reimbursement to the 70th percentile, not for the purpose of seeking a profit, but to cover the costs of providing the services. This would include not only the materials, but also electricity (the rates of which have just increased), our staff (assistants and hygienists, who get their rate paid in full to provide these services), the costs of the building and insurance, just to name a few. Polling of our members has shown that over 350 of our member dentists are willing to see Medicaid and HUSKY patients if this rate were increased. In other states where this has been done, there has been a dramatic increase in dentist participation. It's a win-win situation for everyone involved. In addition, as just passed by our House of Delegates, we are surveying our members to quantify the amount of pro-bono treatment that is already being done for the citizens of our state.

As a practicing dentist for 25 years, I have seen the effects of untreated dental disease. Simply put, this is one of the most preventable diseases there is. Prevention

is key. Untreated dental disease, when it is finally treated, can require complex treatment that is more costly. Untreated dental disease has systemic effects, being implicated in heart disease and diabetes, to name a few. For a few, infections of a dental origin that continue to be untreated have proved fatal. This is an extreme, but illustrates the potential severity of untreated dental disease. Treatment should be on a pro-active basis, with an emphasis on prevention and maintenance. Children with healthy teeth are pain free, and are less likely to miss school or to seek treatment in emergency rooms of hospitals where treatment is very expensive. They're also happier, and have a lot more self-esteem. Children cannot provide for themselves. Increasing the number of dentist providers of these services will allow for the underserved to seek treatment at a greater number of locations because with the increase of reimbursement to the 70th percentile, the costs of providing these services will be maintained.

Everyone deserves to have the best possible health care. By increasing this rate of reimbursement to the 70th percentile, the citizens of Connecticut will be the recipients of this excellent oral health care we, as dentists can provide. Thank-you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I will entertain any questions you might have.