



Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants  
Connecticut Nurses Association  
Connecticut State Dental Association  
Connecticut State Medical Society  
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association

**Connecticut State Dental Association  
Testimony in Support of Revised Raised H. B. 7155  
An Act Concerning a Professional Assistance Program  
for Health Care Professionals**

**Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and members of the Committee  
on Public Health:**

I am Dr. Thomas J Calnon, a dentist with a general practice in Norwalk. I am here today to voice support for the revised language in House Bill 7155, An Act concerning a Professional Assistance Program for Health Care Professionals.

I am chairman of a committee for the Connecticut State Dental Association that is called the Professional Health Committee. The purpose of it is to provide some measure of support for dentists facing issues with alcohol and substance abuse as well as those involving physical disabilities and emotional problems.

Typically a call will come into a hotline number that we maintain for our membership and a confidential visit will be made by one or two members from this committee. We are not certified counselors or therapists and therefore we cannot perform any sort of diagnosis but we do try to listen, find out what's going on and try to direct the person we are seeing into some sort of therapy, 12 step program or maybe even to a treatment center. Often we are successful in at least getting people started on the road to recovery. Beyond that though we are very limited in our approach because we have no formal program for control, monitoring and follow-up during the first few years of recovery; and I am convinced that this close ongoing support early in recovery is essential for long term success.

The Connecticut State Dental Association is fairly small membership wise by national standards and most likely would not be able to have a complete assistance program of its own. Revised House Bill 7155 however, proposes a

single such assistance program for all health care professions in the State of Connecticut that the Connecticut State Dental Association can be a part of. It would provide us with a resource for crisis intervention, treatment referral, monitoring and follow-up, and for education of our membership. Because of this the CSDA supports this bill.

For any such program to be successful it must also have provisions that call for the protection of patient's rights and provide accountability to state regulatory agencies. Revised House Bill 7155 provides mechanisms for ensuring that these rights are maintained and that regular reporting to the required state agencies is carried out.

In summary I feel that this bill strikes a comfortable balance between providing assistance to afflicted health care professionals on the one hand and providing reasonable protection and safeguards to the public on the other. I support it and hope you will also.

Thank You

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