



## **Connecticut State Dental Association**

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**Legislative Testimony  
HB 7375 AAC Health Care Access and Expansion of the HUSKY Program  
Human Services Committee, Thursday, March 15, 2007  
Jonathan Knapp D.M.D.  
Vice-President, CT State Dental Association**

Good afternoon. My name is Jonathan Knapp. I am a practicing dentist in Bethel and currently serve as Vice-President of the Connecticut State Dental Association (CSDA). The CSDA represents 84% of the dentists in our state and we are very troubled by a provision contained in HB 7375.

First, I commend the legislatures' efforts to find solutions to the problem of access to dental care and health care in general. With regard to dentistry, given the woefully low reimbursement rates to dentists who provide Husky services, which have not been raised in well over 13 years, it should not be surprising to see the low participation rates of dentists as providers. The provision in this bill to raise reimbursement rates to the 70th percentile will go a long way in increasing provider participation.

Other states that have raised rates to this level (and indexed them) have seen dramatic increases in dentists who sign up as participating providers and we have approximately 400 dentists who have demonstrated willingness to sign up here in CT at that level. Dentists will not get rich at this level as the overhead costs in a typical practice run at about 60-65% of dollars produced (at the full fee rates). Additionally, the CSDA has committed to devoting staff time to the education, recruitment and credentialing of member dentists as Husky providers if rates are raised to the 70th percentile.

Where we disagree is in the imposition of the 1% provider tax. This tax is a discriminatory, punitive measure that will be counterproductive in terms of improving access to dental care. It is a tax that will be passed on to the consumer along with the additional costs of compliance. Whether directly collected or indirectly applied [as proposed], the healthcare revenue tax will be paid by patients not providers. I expect that dentists will make a point of pointing out the tax and its origins when discussing the increased costs to their patients.

There are other concerns that are raised by this bill as well:

- Will DSS have the capacity to handle the influx of dentists pursuing credentialing?
- Will the tax be imposed on dentists while they are waiting for the credentialing process to proceed? I know of dentists who have waited close to 2 years for completion of credentialing.

I urge you to vote against this bill, as proposed, after the Human Services Committee hearing on Thursday.

Respectfully Submitted.

Johnathan Knapp DMD