



Connecticut State Dental Association

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Legislative Testimony
SB 1 AA Increasing Access to Affordable, Quality Health Care
Public Health Committee, Wednesday, January 31, 2007
Dr. Jack Mooney, President

Good morning Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Dr. Jack Mooney, and I am currently the President of the Connecticut State Dental Association (CSDA), which has over 2,500 members, and constitutes 83% of all Connecticut dentists. The Connecticut State Dental Association thanks you for this opportunity to testify on SB 1, AA Increasing Access to Affordable, Quality Health Care.

I have been a practicing dentist in Putnam since 1989. I treat Medicaid adults and currently treat HUSKY kids for free. It has taken me close to two years to become credentialed with a local clinic, Generations, in an attempt to treat their overflow patients who wait embarrassingly long periods of time for treatment. I have seen this epidemic and have tried to be part of the solution.

On behalf of the CSDA, I would like to thank all of the legislators, especially on this committee, for not only realizing that there is an access to care issue in CT, but also for attempting to do something about it. I strongly believe that oral health, which has for years been proven to impact overall health, should be considered in any universal health care plan. A statistic that you might have heard already is that 49% of children who go to the emergency room are there for dental reasons.

I suggest to you that the dental workforce in CT is sufficient to address the access to oral health care issue. By requesting that the reimbursement rates for providers be raised, dentists are NOT looking to make more money, but rather to minimize their losses. Dentists have always been very generous in donating their services to those who may not have access to care due to financial constraints. Events such as Give Kids A Smile Day, Dental Health Month, and Missions of Mercy highlight the need to reach out to the underserved. However, charity is not a health-care system.

I can say to you that as of today we have pledges from 350 dentists who, if the reimbursement rates were raised to the 70 percentile, would be willing to either treat Medicaid patients for the first time, or to take on additional patients. I expect that this number will grow as the reality of a fee increase for dentists, which has not been significantly changed in well over 13 years, becomes a reality.

At this time I would be happy to answer any questions that the Committee may have.