



Connecticut State Dental Association

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Legislative Testimony
HB5540: An Act Concerning Charitable Dental Care
Public Health Committee
Friday, February 29, 2008

Good Morning members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Ernest Spira. I am a practicing periodontist in Glastonbury and Manchester. I am also on the Board of Governors for the Connecticut State Dental Association. I am here today to testify in support of HB 5540 An Act Concerning Charitable Dental Care.

The Connecticut Mission of Mercy is a program to provide free dental care to approximately 1,000 underserved and low income individuals regardless of age. The Mission of Mercy is a state-by-state program. Volunteers are not only from within Connecticut, but from outside states as well. I, myself, have participated in programs in Colorado and Virginia. In addition to dentists, dental hygienists want to participate from outside Connecticut. Therefore, incorporating hygienists into this legislation would be very important.

The Connecticut State Dental Association has already started planning the 2009 and 2010 events. This will be an annual program. The CSDA would hope that HB 5540 would not be restricted to the year 2008.

As the current language in the bill states, the participating dentist will be required to hold a current license in good standing in another state, as well as maintain professional liability insurance or other indemnity against liability for professional malpractice in amounts greater than those required by section 20-126d of the 2008 supplement to the statutes. I would like to suggest that the language also read that the participating practitioner will be asked to verify both the license in good standing as well as the professional liability insurance.

Finally, the Connecticut State Dental Association would like to suggest that HB 5540 also be applicable for those non-Connecticut dentists and hygienists who want to participate in similar charitable dental events, as well as in catastrophic-type events such as a "hurricane Katrina" disaster.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

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