



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE February 29, 2008

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House Bill 5540 - An Act Concerning Charitable Dental Care

The Department of Public Health supports House Bill 5540.

This bill will allow dentists who are appropriately licensed in other states to provide uncompensated dental care to uninsured and low-income residents of the State of Connecticut as part of the Connecticut Mission of Mercy without having to obtain a Connecticut dental license. The Mission of Mercy is a program operated in many states that is designed to bring together dental practitioners from across the country to provide uncompensated care to persons who may not otherwise have access to dental care. April, 2008 is the first time that dental services will be offered in Connecticut through the Mission of Mercy program.

Practitioners from other states who provide care during the Mission of Mercy would be required to maintain professional liability coverage in amounts equal to that which is required for Connecticut licensed practitioners and would only be authorized to provide care and services to persons who are participating in this charitable event.

It is the Department's understanding that dental hygienists have also expressed interest in participating in the Connecticut Mission of Mercy, and that plans are currently underway to schedule this charitable event in future years. The Department respectfully requests the Committee to consider revisions to this bill that would allow licensed dental hygienists from other states to also participate in this initiative, under similar conditions to those placed on dentists, and to eliminate the specific dates identified in the bill to allow licensed dental practitioners from other states to participate in future years without having to seek another statutory amendment. The Department would welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee in developing revised language that would address these issues.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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