

**Submitted Testimony to:** Senator Jonathan Harris, Representative Betsy Ritter  
and the Public Health Committee Members.  
**In Support of:** Raised Bill 5630

**March 4, 2009**

Sen. Harris, Rep. Ritter and Members of the Committee:

My name is Joanne Verallis. I am a licensed, registered dental hygienist practicing in Connecticut. I support Raised Bill 5630, an act concerning the establishment of an Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP).

I have been a practicing dental hygienist for almost 25 years. I have served, and continue to serve a population of geriatric patients who risk their health on a day-to-day basis because they are unable to afford dental treatment. I have seen caries and recurrent decay go untreated because these people can barely make ends meet on their limited income. This is a population that is often immunocompromised and cannot afford to suffer infection that may affect them systemically. Further, the inability to masticate food properly can lead to pneumonia and other respiratory difficulties, not to mention gastro-intestinal complications. I also serve a population of "state" patients whose hygiene is often poor and who need treatment beyond the scope of what can be provided in-office. One, in particular, stands out in my mind. This individual is physically incapable of caring for his own mouth. He was suffering from severe periodontal disease including copious amount of calculus, much bone loss and pocketing. He is noncompliant in the office. It took seven years of constant referrals to UCONN health center and, finally, a severe oral infection to get him treated under anesthesia and to get his needs met. I realize that the clinic at UCONN is very busy and cannot serve the great number of patients that are in need of treatment. For this reason, the position of ADHP is essential to expedite the treatment of this suffering population of patients.

Please consider this testimony and feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

*Joanne Verallis, RDH*

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