

Testimony for Public Hearing on Bill#5630:

Good Afternoon/Morning,

Thank you for taking the time today to consider Bill 5630. My name is Lois Villa, I am a Certified Dental Assistant and I am V. President of the CDAA. I am speaking before you today, not on the behalf of my association or even as a certified dental assistant. I am here today as a voice for the clients I serve who don't have a voice. They are the public who are underserved in many areas of healthcare but for today I am speaking for the patients who do not have access to dental care. I work for DMHAS, @ CVH, where the need is so great. Many of my patients have not received dental care in many years nor do they have access to dental care. The patients who are long term at my hospital, receive dental care, but so much more can be done for them by expanding the functions of dental auxiliaries. The fact is, there are a GREAT number of dental assistants who are working in public health such as; hospitals, corrections, schools and community clinics. If this legislation is passed we can provide MORE services in LESS time and many more patients will get the care they deserve.

At CVH, our addiction clients could receive services that we might not have been otherwise able to provide, and will DECREASE the chance they will have future dental pain and INCREASE the chance of their rehabilitation to succeed. Too many times clients tell us that they returned to their addiction because they had dental pain and could NOT find care. Community clinics are MAXED out, some with as much as a year waiting list or they are not even accepting new patients. CT has fallen behind in increasing access to care and increasing state reimbursements has not proven, as of yet, to increase dental access. Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries are a PROVEN method to increase dental care for the underserved. In the US over 3/4 of the states have "EFDA's" and have utilized them successfully. "EFDA's" have been around since the mid 70's, they are utilized in our armed forces and on reservations, where the need is great. We are not reinventing the wheel. For those who challenge some of the competencies, I say, SHOW ME WHERE EFDA's are UNSAFE! The burden of proof is on them. There is proof however, that EFDA's are successful through most of this country, and in fact, all of the competencies are provided under the supervision of a licensed dentist. The dentists have the final say and would be required to make sure all procedures provided are up to standards. This is a win, win, win, situation. Let me also add that THIS IS AT NO COST TO THE STATE. At a time when we are in an economic crisis, we as providers and you as legislators have an obligation to the public to come up with ways to increase access to dental care that are safe, proven and COST EFFECTIVE. How much better can we get than NO COST! State schools can provide this education as adult education and perhaps actually profit from the courses that will be required. Some of the goals of CT's own DPH are "to develop legislative proposals to enhance the oral health of CT residents and build workforce capacity and expertise.." Short term solutions such as CSDA's Annual "Mission of Mercy" are good but they are a band-aid on a crisis where we need long term solutions. CSDA's own goal according to an NPR article, is to "work towards increasing adult access to dental care", what better way than expanding the functions of CERTIFIED dental assistants who are a VITAL part of the dental team.

Bottom line here is: Expanding the functions of the dental auxiliary should substantially improve the capacity of public health settings to care for the poor and other underserved populations. This has been PROVEN to work, creates more skilled & better trained dental auxiliary and will increase dental care to those who so desperately need it, therefore EVERYONE wins. Thank you for your time and consideration of HB 5630.