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**TESTIMONY RE: COMMITTEE Bill: 5630, AN ACT CONCERNING THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF LICENSURE FOR AN ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE  
PRACTITIONER**

**Public Health Committee Hearing**

**March 16, 2009**

Good morning Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut. I am Dr. Mary Jane Williams current chairperson of its Government Relations Committee and chair of nursing at the University of Hartford. I have practiced in my profession for 45 years in Connecticut. I am providing testimony on Committee Bill 5630, An Act Concerning the Establishment of Licensure for an Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner.

Connecticut Nurses' Association supports Committee Bill: 5630 which addresses the Plan.

- Oral health – along with physical and emotional health – makes up the triad of important aspects of overall health. Good care of the mouth prevents disease not only in the mouth but also in the rest of the body.
- Access to dental care has been a major health issue because of the limited number of providers who will accept state reimbursement.

The Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) will create wider access to oral health care. Access to dental care in the US is a privilege. We have fewer providers and a growing number of uninsured, coupled with a dental provider shortage, that is further complicated by geographic maldistribution. Now we have an oral health care provider

crisis that has a direct affect on health of the public and the economic future of the state. Most recently there has been a move on to move to a “mid-level practitioner” as a strategy to address the growing need for primary dental services. It is proposed that the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner

- Will provide primary oral health care.
- Be competent in working with populations with special needs.
- Be able to evaluate oral health needs of populations with limited access to care.
- Develop, implement and monitor dental hygiene care programs for at risk populations.
- Participate as a member of a comprehensive health care team.
- Improve oral health for all, thus improving general health.
- Promote the social value of oral health
- Address oral health as an integral part of general health
- Develop a unified strategy for oral health improvement

The ADHP role will be built upon the knowledge and skills of the RDH (Registered Dental Hygienist). The ADHP will create wider access to oral health care.

Thank you and we encourage the committee to vote favorably to support this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jane M. Williams PhD., RN