



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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MEMBER
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Dear Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, and Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee,

I am here today in **SUPPORT of HB5630, An Act Concerning the Establishment of Licensure for an Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner**. I applaud Representative Nardello for introducing this legislation that primes the way for burgeoning structural change in the field of dental health.

I have had three constituents meet with me to ask me to support this bill. All of them are passionate about their field of dental hygiene, and all have a strong desire to help underserved populations. They've shared with me their personal experiences where they've witnessed firsthand the problems of poor dental care in underserved populations. They've also educated me about the consequences of non-preventive dental care, which can go beyond dental health and include diseases such as systemic infection, heart disease, pneumonia, and more.

Healthcare delivery must evolve if everyone is to have access to service. Expanding the scope of practice of dental hygienists who elect to pursue professional growth with an advanced degree is a move in that direction and joins other medical fields that have experienced similar change: nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and pathology assistants all play a critical role in public health by mitigating healthcare costs through efficient delivery of high quality medical services. Similarly, increased access to dental care for underserved populations can be achieved by fully utilizing the skill sets of the advanced dental hygiene practitioners, thereby satisfying a public health need in a cost effective manner.

This legislation is well-crafted in that in addition to providing detailed practice guidelines, it still allows flexibility for professional discretion in determining the scope of practice provided by the advanced dental hygiene practitioner in each particular practice setting (see lines 388-394, "collaborative management agreement"). Also, the specific definition of areas where practice may occur (e.g., public health facilities, workforce shortage areas; see lines 395-398, and lines 440-444) should mitigate concerns regarding any impact on the private practice sector.

In closing, increased access to dental care for underserved populations through the use of advanced dental hygiene practitioners will not only improve public health, but will also be the fiscally prudent course.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Rep. Annie Hornish