



ORIGIN OF
DENTAL HYGIENE
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**CONNECTICUT DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION, INC.
ADVOCATES FOR ORAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT**

December 8, 2009

Testimony Regarding the Governor's Budget Recommendations

The Connecticut Dental Hygienists Association, Inc. (CDHA) opposes the Governor's Deficit Mitigation Plan proposal, which disproportionately hurts the most vulnerable people; low-income children, parents and seniors.

The elimination of this critical coverage is not a cost-saving mechanism. It is a barrier to access to health care. Oral health care continues to be a problem for our low-income adults, including Connecticut's growing elderly population. We know that oral health is linked to total health and that poor oral health exacerbates systemic health problem such as heart disease, diabetes, and poor nutrition. We have concerns about the increased risk for mothers with periodontal disease to give birth to low birth weight babies, and to transmit infectious decay causing bacteria to their children. Without access to regular dental care, disease will progress leading to pain, life threatening infections and tooth loss. The cost of treatment will rise and more adults will seek high cost emergency room care.

CDHA has members who work within community providing direct service to the populations this will affect. They see on a daily basis the challenges low income adults face while trying to access oral health care and the physical, emotional and social consequences of poor oral health.

Please do not cut the non-emergency adult dental services covered by Medicaid. The health care safety net, including its oral health care provisions, is fundamental to the care of Connecticut residents. CDHA urges you to protect adult dental services and find better solutions to mitigate the impact of our budget deficit. Do not balance our budget on the backs of our most needy residents.

We understand the state of the economy in Connecticut today. However, we believe taking away opportunities for prevention and early interventions will, in fact, be more costly in the long run. We believe in oral healthcare for all - it is the right thing to do for the residents of Connecticut.

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