

Legislative Testimony
H.B. 5630 AAC The Establishment Of Licensure For An Advanced
Dental Hygiene Practitioner
Public Health Committee
Monday, March 16, 2009
Karen Mendelsohn, D.D.S.

Good afternoon Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Karen Mendelsohn. I am a licensed dentist practicing in Windsor, CT and a healthcare management consultant. Please accept this document as my written testimony in opposition to HB 5630.

After reviewing the proposed bill, it raises numerous questions and concerns. The bill calls for a new, mid-level provider, the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) to address the access to care issue. This is a newly created position that does not exist anywhere else in the United States. And there is no indication that it will increase access to dental care for underserved populations.

Dental hygiene practice is fundamentally prevention-oriented. A hygienist is not skilled nor routinely exposed to the management process of restorative treatment. The proposed ADHP is under-trained to perform surgical procedures. Patients with complex medical needs are common in a public health facility. The mid-level practitioner would not have the necessary proficiency and experience to provide treatment to this population of patients.

Connecticut dentists are actively addressing the access to care issue. The Connecticut State Dental Association has been successful and continues in the recruitment of dentists to participate as HUSKY providers. The existing dental offices throughout the state are currently capable of initiating patient treatment today without any additional legislation or cost to the state.

In summary, I believe House Bill 5630 would not result in improved access to care for the underserved nor would the best qualified providers treat the most complex patients in public health facilities and therefore is not deserving of your support.

Respectfully submitted,

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