

**MARCH 16, 2009**

**HOUSE BILL 5630: An Act Concerning the Establishment of Licensure for an Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

Thanks for the opportunity to testify on behalf of this bill in support of Expanded Function Dental Assistants (EFDAs). I think expanded functions in both the hygiene area along with EFDA would certainly be beneficial in a public health setting and I am here in hoping that by supporting this bill that it will continue to keep the dialogue alive to come up with a final proposal that will be of great benefit to those who need care, but are right now not getting it.

**I'm Jeff Rosow, the dental director at Ct. Valley Hospital.** Ct. Valley Hospital (CVH) is the state psychiatric hospital in Middletown. Our patient population consists of general psychiatric, forensic psychiatric and substance abuse clientele. Dental disease is rampant in these patients due to neglect secondary to their illness, diet, and medications along with generally not having access to dental care. As in many public health facilities we are understaffed in relation to the tremendous needs of our patients. Expanded Function Auxiliaries have been shown to be a cost effective, efficient, and safe means of increasing services. By allowing properly trained assistants with proven competencies in the mechanical areas of both restorative and preventative dentistry, more time is allowed for both the dentist and hygienist to provide care required at the higher end of the diagnostic and more complicated treatment areas for which their training provides. The ultimate responsibility for the quality of care under the EFDA proposals lies with, as it should, the dentist. Under the present proposal, the dentist decides which if any expanded functions will be provided by the properly trained auxiliaries. It is also a wonderful means of quality control. There is no one responsible for the dentist's work except the dentist, i.e. no one looking over his or her shoulder. In the case of EFDAs it is the dentist's duty to make sure that the procedures are properly performed. I know in many cases the dental assistants may be able to perform the mechanical procedures as well if not better than the dentist and by being given the opportunity can increase the quality of care. At our hospital specifically I have no doubt that our two assistants and one hygienist if provided with the proper training would be more than capable of doing all of the procedures outlined in the EFDA proposal, at a level comparable to many dentists including myself.

By allowing them to do these procedures I'll be able to see more patients along with providing more services at a lower cost to those that we do see. In addition, at CVH, due to the uniqueness and vulnerability of our patient population, comfort level often determines cooperation. Increasing the competencies of our staff provides a greater variety of choices as to who can best provide the most treatment to a particular patient. Since EFDAs are being effectively used in 32 other states, training programs have been developed, and it helps fulfill a tremendous need within those populations that depend on public health, I feel that what better time than now to pass this legislation. **Thank you.**