



**Legislative Testimony and Letter of Support to the Human Services Committee
Regarding: HB 5355 AAC An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practice Pilot Program**

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

Submitted by: Laurel Risom RDH MPH

**Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and
Members of the Human Services Committee,**

My name is Laurel Risom; I am a licensed, registered dental hygienist living in the town of Old Lyme, CT. Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony to you regarding HB 5355.

I support the Establishment of An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP). I have been a practicing registered dental hygienist for more than 30 years. I work in private practice and I teach Community Dental Hygiene at the University of Bridgeport, Fones School of Dental Hygiene, Bridgeport, CT.

I take senior dental hygiene students into the Community to educate and dentally screen the Community underserved residents who have limited access to care. We go to the following sites in the Greater Bridgeport Area.

- **Adult Day Care Centers**
- **Nursing Homes**
- **Senior Centers**
- **Mental Health Facilities**
- **Alcohol & Chemical Dependency Facilities**
- **Pregnant & Teen populations**
- **Emotional & Physically Disabled & Special Needs**
- **Mild/Moderately Developmentally Disabled (under site supervision)**
- **Public & Private Schools-Grades K-8 (Lesson Plan Observation and Delivery)**

At these facilities during oral health screenings my students and I identify many dental needs. We fill out written referral information for these people that we see and their care takers, referring them for the necessary dental treatment, but many of these people have limited access to care, an inability to get to the care and limited financial resources to seek their needed dental treatment.

The adoption of HB 5355 will expand access to care by adding a midlevel RDH oral health care provider within the dental team (ADHP) to serve our citizens in public health settings like the above mentioned community underserved areas. HB 5355 is timely and our citizens need these services now. Children in Bridgeport still get sent home from school because of a toothache! Our seniors suffer with inadequate dental care due to financial and transportation barriers.

This pilot program should also include the Greater Bridgeport area, there is so much dental need in this underserved population. The ADHP goal is to provided needed midlevel dental services to the underserved populations where these people live and work, in public health settings to help eliminate barriers to dental care.

I have a power point presentation to share with you, photos of the University of Bridgeport Fones School of dental hygiene clinical facility. I urge all of you to come and visit to see that we can accommodate the ADHP program and the Bridgeport underserved citizens once the ADHP program is established and enacted. According to Dr. Fones, who established the profession of dental hygiene in Connecticut in 1913 "it is of equal importance that dental hygienists provide outreach services to those who cannot afford private dental care".

In closing, I would be happy to discuss HB 5355 with you and hope we can expect your support in delivering more access to dental health care for the citizens of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

**Laurel Risom, RDH MPH
CDHA Vice President
Clinical Assistant and Community Professor
University of Bridgeport
Fones School of Dental Hygiene
Bridgeport Ct 066604**

Residence:
301 Ferry Road
Old Lyme CT 06371
860-304-3191
Laurelrisomrdh@yahoo.com