

**Legislative Testimony**  
**Human Services Committee**  
**HB 5355 AAC An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practice Pilot Program**  
**Tuesday, March 2, 2010**  
**Tina Liang, DMD**

Dear Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services Committee,

I am writing to you in opposition to HB5355, an act concerning an Advanced Dental Hygiene Practice Pilot Program. My name is Tina S. Liang, a general dentist in both hospital and private practice setting since 1987. I am currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Craniofacial Sciences at University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine. I have been teaching dental students and General Practice Residents in didactic and clinical dentistry for 23 years. I am very involved in my community, a member of Ct Mission of Mercy (MOM) since its inception. I have seen the exponential growth of MOM in volunteers providing access care to all dental services to the needy population. We have continued to support those who need dental care. At the University of Connecticut Health Center, dental students and residents with faculty supervision provide excellent care to the Medicaid population. In our private practice, we are part of the over 1,000 private dentists whom are proud to promote and provide access to dental care for the Husky patients. We continue to welcome new Husky patients daily for comprehensive treatment of oral diseases. On behalf of the Ct dentists, I feel confident that we are capable of meeting the continuing demands of this population.

I am puzzled at the intention of this Bill. Are we saying that we need additional providers to provide dental services when we are providing access to care to the needy population? We have provided solutions to the Husky problems with the increase from 150 dentists to 1,000+ dentists who actively participate in the Husky program and similarly with MOM.

It is extremely costly to fund a Pilot Program and the establishment of a new level of provider, the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP). I feel the monies and resources would be better spent if we channeled to the already thriving Husky Children program and the much needed adult Husky program.

As a consummate student and teacher, I have serious concerns about the safety of the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner providing adequate dental care especially in the area of prescribing medications with their proposed training curriculum. Over the last 2 decades, I have given lectures on Drug Interactions and Management of the Medically Compromised Patients to students and dentists. The purpose is to increase their didactic and clinical knowledge to make the right choice of prescribing medication for the special patient in a particular situation. I doubt that a 2-year masters program is sufficient in producing proficient, competent individuals enabling them to prescribe medications. Licensed dentists must successfully complete a 4 year accredited dental school program with passing many levels of written and clinical proficiency

examinations. As a former Director for a level-one trauma hospital based General Practice Residency Program, I have concerns about the same level of provider in performing extractions period. The bill proposes these individuals to be allowed to do “non-surgical” or “simple extractions” however, many “simple extractions” become surgical extractions after treatment begins. In short, the outcome is unpredictable and I envision potential serious complications such as bleeding, swelling and infection for the patients.

In summary, I want to stress that dentists are at the front of the problem of access to care. We are the solutions to the problem and will continue to work with the problems to ensure that we have and will meet the demands of the needy population of Connecticut.

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee for allowing me to testify before you today and would be happy to make myself available, now at any other time, should you have questions.

Sincerely,  
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