

Legislative Testimony
Human Services Committee
HB 5355 AAC An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practice Pilot Program
Tuesday, March 2, 2010
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Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services committee, I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony to you regarding HB 5355.

My name is Anjanette Gjertsen and I am an endodontist practicing in Norwalk. Before attending dental school, I was a dental hygienist for 15 years. Stated frankly, I did not know what I did not know. Now having 11 years (4 years to attain a BA, 4 years to attain a DDS degree, and 3 years to attain a certificate in endodontics) of tertiary education, including related degrees and certificates, I see the minimal education requirements of the proposed Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) as inadequate. For example, the clinical curriculum of the proposed ADHP program contains 1 credit hour in Management of Dental Emergencies and Urgent Care. That is 45 clock hours of exposure in developing these competencies. Dental emergencies and urgent care are an integral part of my specialty practice, which again, required 11 years of tertiary education. The equivalent of 1 week of education in said area of dentistry is in no doubt inadequate.

Secondly, the proposal would allow an ADHP to "prescribe, dispense, and administer...analgesics, anti-inflammatories, and antibiotics." The dental school and endodontic curriculae require on average 1.5 years of combined didactic course work. This is a great discrepancy, and again, an insufficient amount of training to be prescribing controlled substances and antibiotics. With the aging population and an increasing amount of the population taking prescription medication, the issue of drug interactions is of great concern. Considering such, the state of Connecticut residents need better educated practitioners than the proposed ADHP can provide.

In closing, I would like to again 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.

Respectfully submitted,

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