



Connecticut Dental Hygienists' Association

**Legislative Testimony to the Human Services Committee
Regarding: RB 5355 Advanced Dental Hygiene Practice Pilot Program
Monday, March 1, 2010
Submitted by: Celeste Baranowski, RDH**

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

My name is Celeste Baranowski and I am a licensed, registered dental hygienist practicing and living in Stamford, CT. Thank you for raising HB 5355 and for providing the opportunity to present testimony.

I serve as the CDHA (Connecticut Dental Hygienists' Association) Legislative Chair and I work as a Public Health Dental Hygienist. I see and am frustrated by the need for the Establishment of An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) daily.

I support HB 5355 with some amendments; the geographical area should not be limited. If there needs to be a limit - limit it to existing Public Health Dental Hygiene Programs – where there is a proven need for this cost effective workforce model. Bridgeport's Public Health Dental Hygiene Program has been in existence since 1913, Hartford since 1917 & Stamford since 1928. There is documentation of need and statistics to back it up. This is Connecticut history. Second; I did not envision the need for a pilot program. The ADHP Master's is an 18 month program, so the time may need to be amended to 2 or 3 years. This safe and cost effective workforce model will be built on a licensed professional, the Registered Dental Hygienist. The legislation would be asking working, licensed dental health professionals to spend time and money without the guarantee or the possibility of return on their investment.

The certification is extensive. There will be funding concerns for the universities that offer the ADHP Masters and certification. We commend the committee's proposal for this pilot and understand why the language was added. However, the pilots have already been done – twice in Massachusetts at Forsyth School of Dental Hygiene & also at the University of Kentucky. The programs were successful and there is literature available to show the measured successes. It is time to propose a safe and cost effective workforce model that will provide access to oral healthcare for Connecticut citizens.

House Bill 5355 will expand access to care, by adding another workforce model within the dental team. What better way to do this then expand the education and thereby, the role of an already licensed, registered dental hygienist.

HB 5355 (ADHP) is timely. Our citizens need these services now. Much like the APRN in medicine, the ADHP will become an integral part of the dental health team. It took the

APRN 30 years to come into existence and now most of us see this integral part of the medical team.

Those opposed will say dental hygienists are not qualified to dispense and administer analgesics, anti-inflammatories and antibiotics. Dental Hygienists have taken pharmacology as part of our RDH education and licensure. More extensive pharmacology education will be provided in the ADHP curriculum. The curriculum thoroughly covers all proposed competencies.

This bill would allow the ADHP to perform “non-surgical” extractions on mobile, exfoliating, primary and permanent teeth. Those opposed will say there really is no such thing as a “non-surgical” extraction and that bleeding or infection can occurred. There is always risk, this is the reason to use the ADHP workforce model. The RDH, BS will receive education and certification beyond their existing license and be properly trained clinically to become an ADHP provider meeting all competencies in the curriculum. Dental Hygienists can obtain NPI (National Provider Identification) numbers and most dental hygienists working in Public Health Settings currently have NPI numbers and therefore provide Husky services in CT. The ADHP will obtain and be issued NPI numbers as part of the certification.

The recent PEW Foundation report rated Connecticut with a grade of “A” (only six states received this top grade) for its delivery of oral health care. Dental Hygienists were an integral part in delivering this care. There was only one area lacking and that was restorative care, which can only be perform by a dentist. This shows the need for the ADHP workforce model to be added to the dental health team in Connecticut to augment the dentists efforts.

I support the Establishment of An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP). There are other proposed solutions for improving access to care. However, none are based on the expanded education and training of an already licensed, dental professional. *Why reinvent the wheel?* We believe the ADHP would be the most effective addition to the dental team.

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,

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