

Legislative Testimony
Human Services Committee
HB 5355 AAC An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practice Pilot Program
Tuesday, March 2, 2010
Jon Davis, D.M.D.

Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services committee, my name is Jon Davis. I am President Elect of the Connecticut State Dental Association and have been a practicing dentist in Fairfield for 33 years. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you regarding HB 5355.

I speak today in opposition to this legislation. This legislation poses more questions than it provides answers. First of all what is its purpose? Its stated purpose on page 5 says it is "to establish a pilot program to provide advanced dental hygiene practitioner services in public health facilities located in the city of Hartford. Why? Has a study been done that provided evidence that there is this need in Hartford? What this legislation is asking you to do is to create a new dental provider. A provider for which there is no scientifically demonstrated need. This legislation is simply to expand the scope of practice of dental hygienists. No where in this bill is access to care mentioned which is the usual reason for creating a new provider. Nor is there any assertion that public safety and quality of care is a primary concern. It is a shot gun bill sent out to see if any thing sticks to the wall. The pilot study has no stated outcome objectives and no procedures to measure the outcome but states that after one year the report shall include, but not be limited to: recommendations to expand the pilot to other geographic areas of the state. So the legislation already concludes the pilot will be successful before it is even done and expansion is a foregone conclusion.

The bill does not even get into the questions of what type of pilot study it will be, who will fund it, who will run it, who will monitor it and who will quantify the results. Questions abound with this bill especially in terms of the proposed competencies or procedures to be performed. Some procedures go way beyond the scope of providing primary dental care. As a practicing dentist for 33 years who has done probably a 1000 extractions I never consider any extraction non surgical. I have extracted teeth which appear simple and turn out to be very complicated. No person without extensive training and knowledge of how to transition from a simple to a surgical extraction should be allowed such a privilege. This is a matter of public safety and is only one example of the dangerous path this bill goes down.

Connecticut enjoys the second highest ratio of dentists to population in the country. Some areas of the state may not have all of the dentists they need but our state is not so big that care cannot be obtained by traveling a short distance. The dentists of Connecticut have heard the call to provide access to care and over 1000 have enrolled in the Husky program providing quality care to children and adults in unprecedented numbers in the most efficient place possible; the private dental office. Much has been accomplished and much more needs to be done. Utilization rates are 41% for Husky children compared to 65% for children with private insurance. With increased funding for school based clinics utilization could be increased further. Great strides have been made in providing increased access to care as a result of government, advocacy groups, and the dental association's collaborative efforts. The dental association looks forward to

continuing these collaborative efforts to provide safe, quality and affordable dental care to all citizens of Connecticut.

In closing, I would like to again thank the Committee for allowing me to testify before you today and would happy to try and answer any questions you have now or in the future.

Sincerely,

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