

Legislative Testimony
Human Services Committee
Tuesday, March 2, 2010
HB 5355 AAC An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practice Pilot Program
Lawrence J. Singer, DDS

Good afternoon Senator Doyle, Representative Walker, and members of the Human Services Committee. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to present this written testimony regarding HB 5355. I am Lawrence Singer, from Wallingford where I have been practicing dentistry for forty six years. I am a Past President of the Connecticut State Dental Association, having held that office in 1977, and have served two terms on its Board of Governors.

I mention these points only to impress you with the fact that I am very familiar with the issue of expanded duties by dental auxiliaries which has been before the Connecticut Legislature throughout at least three decades, and has usually been promoted as an aid to increase access to care by dentists to the public.

As dental health practitioners, we are regulated by General Statute 379. Over time this statute has been amended, mostly in the area of degrees of supervision that the dentist may exert over and within his auxiliary staff, and most recently whereby appropriately trained and educated dental hygienists might administer local anesthesia.

HB 5355 does intimate that the dentist will be involved in patient treatment, but as a collaborator, and not just in a supervisory capacity. This is a significant point, and must not be glossed over, as if HB 5355 were to be advanced, it would seem to conflict with HB 5630, a bill that failed in 2009, and dealt more with scope of practice than access to care.

I do not offer this testimony to remind you of the repetitious nature of "scope-of-practice" bills, whether it is Optometrists versus Ophthalmologists, or Chiropractors versus Orthopedists. Only that they are frequently presented as something that they really are not.

HB 5355 would demand revision of existing statutes which, by their very nature and purpose are designed to protect the health and well being of the public, and would experiment with a segment of our society that already seem to be receiving lesser volumes of health care than they rightfully deserve.

I urge the Human Services Committee to vote to reject HB 5355.

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