



University of
Connecticut

School of Dental Medicine

TESTIMONY

Appropriations Committee

**HB 6380, AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING
JUNE 30, 2013.**

March 4, 2011

Distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is R. Lamont MacNeil, Dean, School of Dental Medicine, University of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding **HB 6380, AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2013.**

I am asking that you consider the financial impact on the School of Dental Medicine's Dental Clinics relative to the Governor's proposed budget that eliminates or reduces coverage for some aspects of routine dental care for individuals covered by Medicaid or SAGA in the Department of Social Services Budget. The proposal reduces adult preventive care visits (e.g. exams, cleanings and radiographs) from a twice-a-year to a once-a-year schedule and eliminates some restorative and prosthodontic procedures through a new pre-authorization program. These changes will have a detrimental effect on the educational programs at the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine (SODM) and will significantly impact our financial outcomes.

As many of you know, the SODM is the largest, single provider of oral health care services to Medicaid and SAGA recipients in the State. We see patients from every zip code in the State of Connecticut. In FY'10, we provided 93,113 patient visits at our dental clinics in Farmington and Hartford, of which 68.2% were for Medicaid recipients. We are committed to providing good, appropriate dental care for all of our patients and comprehensive instruction for our students in contemporary practice protocols that best prevent and treat oral disease. It is extremely important that our students learn within an environment that embraces an evidence-based approach to care and one that does not arbitrarily sway in its definition of 'appropriate care' based on a particular plan or coverage. We currently provide appropriate dental care that falls beyond the Medicaid coverage guidelines to our Medicaid patients in the form of charity (or uncompensated) care. This obviously places considerable financial burden on the School and its Clinics. The changes proposed in H.B. 6380 will significantly increase this burden. The estimated impact of the proposed changes in coverage is a \$643,000 annual loss to the Dental Clinics at the UCHC.

The SODM provides dental care to underserved populations beyond its own facilities throughout the State. Since 1999, the School has partnered with community clinics to expand access to care; we are currently working with seventeen (17) safety net providers in Hartford, New Britain, Middletown, Norwalk, East Hartford, Manchester, Waterbury, Norwich, New Haven, Willimantic, Putnam, Derby, Bridgeport, and Torrington. With this community outreach effort, we have been able to provide an additional 45,545 patient visits to residents who otherwise would not receive dental care. If the changes proposed in H.B. 6380 are implemented, the spectrum of dental care services provided at these clinics will be similarly impacted and this will negatively affect the quality of the educational experience for our students and have financial implications on these clinics as well.

As the state's only public academic medical center, the SODM will continue to support its public service mission, and we will continue to provide the citizens of the State of Connecticut with the finest possible dental care while training future generations of qualified dental practitioners.

I respectfully urge you to consider the financial impact of the proposed changes within H.B. 6380 on our School's Dental Clinics and on our Health Center's budget. I ask that you consider ways that this may be avoided or otherwise remedied.

Thank you.