

Legislative Testimony
Human Services Committee
HB5616 ACC Licensure of Advanced Dental Practitioners
March 1.2011
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Senator Musto, Representative Teracyk and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Stephanie Urillo. I am a general dentist practicing dentistry in Southington for the past twenty-three years. I currently serve as the liaison from the Connecticut State Dental Association to the dental students at the University of Connecticut, School of Dental Medicine and on the Allied Oral Health Advisory Committee for the Tunxis Community College dental assisting and dental hygiene programs. Thank-you for the opportunity to present testimony in opposition to HB5616.

The Allied Oral Health Advisory Committee met just last week at Tunxis Community College. Discussed widely at this meeting was the cost of educating these individuals who participate in this program. The students are assessed an additional fee due to the cost of the program, especially the dental hygiene program. In addition, the state has cut funding to the school. One individual is retiring at the end of the school year this May. Her position is not being replaced because it is too expensive. Instead, it will be divided and part-time employees will fill this position. I was informed at this meeting that 40% of a full-time employee's pay is benefits. To fill this position with part-time employees will eliminate this additional cost.

A newly created position as this bill proposes will need educators to implement this program. The state of Connecticut is faced with severe budget cuts in every department. I ask you to consider how the state will pay for the additional educators, the supplies and the facilities needed to provide this "advanced" education.

Since the increase in HUSKY fees paid to providers, there has been an exponential increase in the number of dental providers in the state. Patients are seen on a timely basis. The Department of Social Services will tell you that any child in CT can get an emergency appointment within 24 hours, and a routine appointment within 2 weeks. When the hygiene student at the meeting at Tunxis last week mentioned that the hygiene students had to get patients to provide FREE cleanings, I suggested that they contact churches and soup kitchens. The immediate response from several individuals in the room was that TRANSPORTATION was the big problem. There are individuals, children and adults, who simply cannot get themselves to an office, community health care center or clinic because they have no method of transportation. This does not equate with access of care. This is simply another lack of access for these individuals.

When one is educated to a higher level, one expects to be remunerated at a higher level of pay. The costs for providing treatment will be the same for a dentist and an advanced practitioner providing the treatment. Our practices are businesses, also. We have a fiscal

bottom line to maintain our costs and pay the bills. The “Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner” will have these same costs and must maintain the bottom line.

I urge the committee to defeat HB 5616. Thank-you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

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