

"Oral health for all"



**Testimony of the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI)  
to the Human Services Committee  
concerning SB 1013  
March 15, 2011**

Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak and members of the Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 1013.

For the record, I am Dr. Linda Erlanger, COHI Advocacy Consultant. COHI is the state's leading oral health advocate, working with other stakeholders across Connecticut to advance oral health for all.

Oral health is a vital component of one's general health. Oral health affects people physically and psychologically and influences how they grow, how they speak, chew, taste food and socialize, as well as their feelings of social well-being and overall quality of life. The 2008 settlement of the Carr vs. Wilson-Coker lawsuit resulted in a substantial increase to the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership dental provider network, as well as in the number of children receiving dental services under Medicaid. It is an inspiration to see that the efforts of our advocates and our legislators have improved access to oral health in Connecticut and we strive to realize continued progress.

Please know that we are immensely pleased that there were no wholesale cuts to adult dental services under the Governor's budget proposal. The administration's commitment to preservation of Medicaid services for individuals and families does not go unrecognized and we salute the Governor and the legislators for protecting the safety net.

**However, we are very concerned that the proposed language in SB 1013, Section 6 will provide the Commissioner of Social Services with authority to make indiscriminate cuts to adult dental services.** This is not aligned with the Governor's intentions. Other states that have cut adult dental services have subsequently seen their medical costs rise significantly.

We certainly appreciate the state's budget climate and respect the decision in the Governor's budget proposal to limit adult dental periodic exams, cleanings and bitewing x-rays to once per year during fiscal period 2011-2013. However, we strongly request that you continue to support full adult dental services for Medicaid enrollees.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you have further questions or concerns. I can be reached at [lindae@ctoralhealth.org](mailto:lindae@ctoralhealth.org) or at 860.246.2644, ext. 202. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee.