

Legislative Testimony
Human Services Committee
HB5616 AAC Licensure Of Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioners
Tuesday March 1st, 2011
Jamison Scotto, DMD

Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak and members of the Human Services committee, my name is Jamison Scotto and I have been practicing dentistry in the specialty of periodontics for 10 years in the state of Connecticut. I am a member of the Connecticut State Dental Association, President of the Connecticut Society of Periodontists, Treasurer of the Litchfield Society of Periodontists, and a member of the Hartford Dental Society. My partner and I practice in Windsor, West Hartford, and Torrington.

I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony to you in opposition to HB 5616.

I am opposed passing HB5616 at this time. While numerous people have testified over the past several years regarding access to dental care in our state, I would like you to consider the practical business aspects of creating another mid-level practitioner. There is abundant testimony now available showing the available access to care, another provider is not the answer.

An advanced dental hygiene practitioner (ADHP) is being targeted to serve the Medicaid and Husky populations. However, they will still face the same business expenses as most dentists in this state. The requirements of their business overhead will create a "floor" for the fees they would be required to charge in order to cover their expenses. Costs, such as rent, equipment, materials, supplies, telephone lines, and utilities are no different than what the dental community faces today. An ADHP will be required to charge comparable fees to a dentist to provide their service. This will not serve our Medicaid population any better than they already are.

If an ADHP practices in a "public health facility," many of these costs will be shifted to the state and local governments. In these trying financial times, the state and local governments do not have the funds to pay for these additional expenditures. The difference will have to be made up for in fees charged to the patient or the Medicaid system, thus reducing the already limited budget available to pay for treatment.

Second, the proposed educational requirements of a four-year Bachelors degree and a two-year Masters degree is also financially burdensome on someone hoping to become an ADHP. Most hygiene schools in this state are private institutions and the cost for one-year's tuition is approximately \$40,000. This is almost \$10,000 more than the cost of a single year of dental school at the University of Connecticut, School of Dental Medicine. An ADHP coming out of six-years of schooling will have the same educational loans as many dentists after eight years of school in this state. Therefore, they will also have the same educational debt as a practicing dentist and will take many years to pay this financial obligation. This does not make economic sense.

To create this kind of burden on the state and local government budgets is not practical given the current fiscal situation Connecticut faces. To place a financial burden on a provider in an unproven ADHP career is onerous as well. Please consider this as you evaluate HB5616.

In closing, I would like to again respectfully thank the members of the Human Services committee for allowing me to submit this testimony. If you should have any questions I will do my best to make myself available at your convenience.

Sincerely,

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