

February 25, 2011

**Proposed H.B. No. 5616 AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE OF ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTITIONERS**

Dear Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak and members of the Human Services Committee;

As a practicing dental hygienist and an educator for more than 30 years, I have witnessed the dire need for dental health care amongst the underinsured and uninsured Connecticut citizens. We all know how important a healthy mouth is from a social, health, and self esteem standpoint. Oral and systemic health has been linked in the research for the last several years. Health problems are a monumental problem in Connecticut. Keeping mouths healthy reduces the risk of a number of potentially fatal health conditions.

In our current economic times, many have lost jobs along with insurance benefits. Affording dentistry is not an option and accessing public health care services is difficult or non-existent.

Advancing Dental Hygiene Practice through further education and training will create more skilled dental hygiene professionals to improve provide dental care and preventive services to the less fortunate. Similar models exist in other states and Connecticut should join in to implement a progressive model of healthcare.

I ask you for your vote of support of HB #5616

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