

Legislative Testimony
Human Services Committee
HB5616 AAC Licensure Of Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioners
Tuesday March 1st, 2011
Mark L. Schleider, D.D.S.

Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Human Services committee, my name is Mark L. Schleider, D.D.S. I have practiced endodontics in Danbury since 1978. I currently serve as the president of the Connecticut Association of Endodontists . I am also a member of the Dental Policy Advisory Committee to the Connecticut State Department of Social Services, which provides oversight of our state's Dental Medicaid System.

I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony to you in opposition to HB 5616. Due to the fact that there is limited to no language in this bill I am left to assume that it will be identical to or at the very least similar to the 2010 ADHP bill that was before this committee, HB 5355.

Firstly I would like to state that I am against passing this bill. This bill purports to serve the underserved underprivileged, specifically children, by licensing hygienists to practice dentistry independent of the supervision of a licensed dentist, which is the way the statute is currently written. I believe that there was good reason for the original laws to have been written as they were, and believe that the same good reasons remain today.

In my opinion, the large majority of currently licensed hygienists are not trained or qualified to practice dentistry on their own. We do not offer patients the option of having cardiac surgery by either a board-certified surgeon or the operating room nurse. Nor will a Masters-level degree properly ready a hygienist, without a dental school education, to practice dentistry.

I would further suggest that our own state denies having a large "underserved" population. According to Dr. Donna Balaski, Director of the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership, Department of Social Services, all of her departmental data shows that there is more than adequate access to care in the Medicaid dental system. Her department designed and implemented a study to look into this question. The results showed that 93% of attempts to obtain a non-emergency dental appointment resulted in an office appointment. 88% of scheduled appointments were within 4 weeks. The average wait was 11.2 days. 78% of those offices called were able to get the patient in within 2 weeks. This data may be obtained from:

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Hartford, CT 06106
Phone (860) 424 - 5342

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I'm wondering how these ADHPs will fare offering "low-cost" dentistry after purchasing malpractice insurance and all the other costs associated with running a practice. Will their equipment cost less than mine? What about dental insurance reimbursement?

Implementing this bill will impose an additional financial burden on our state's budget deficit. The Dept of Public Health would have to monitor licensing, and would incur all the costs of creating another licensed professional.

It is my understanding that the Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection, Mr. Jerry Farrell, is not in favor of this bill or ADHP because he is already encountering trouble with all the current non-physician, non-dentist drug prescription writers. He is opposed to dealing with yet more drug abuse and allied issues, especially in a second class of provider. I don't believe we should add yet another class.

In closing, I would like to again respectfully thank the members of the Human Services committee for allowing me to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

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