

To: HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

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

February 28, 2011,

Submitted by: MaryEllen McLoughlin, RDH,

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

My name is MaryEllen McLoughlin and I am a licensed, registered dental hygienist in the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony to you regarding HB 5616.

I support the Establishment of An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP). I work with children in the Stamford Public Schools. I have seen the advent of the nurse practitioner and the positive impact that model of provider has had on the provision of health care for our students.

Public Health Dentistry is in need of such a provider model – specifically the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner. This mid-level provider will be well-educated and expertly trained to be able to diagnose and treat much of what is seen daily in virtually all public health dental facilities. At this time I cannot diagnose and I also can't help the students who have very loose teeth. I am not allowed to help a child remove their loose baby teeth, however the custodian, principal or nurse can. For that matter anyone else can!. Just like as moms and dads we do this with our children's 20 baby teeth!

Having an ADHP to manage the most common and least complex dental procedures will allow the dentists to focus primarily on those complex procedures that require the additional education and training of a dentist.

I routinely see small lesions grow into large ones, and what could have been a small procedure too often became a pulpotomy (baby root canal) or even an extraction – all due to the inability of the dentist to “get to” all the kids. Despite the fact that Connecticut does have many dentists, the reality is that there are not enough in public health facilities where the problems lie and I have not seen this reality significantly change.

In terms of economics, it is extremely cost-effective to employ nurse practitioners vs. doctors. Similarly, it will be cost-effective to employ ADHP's whose salaries will be comparable to nurse practitioners. The significant savings translate into increased services for the underserved. This helps to eliminate barriers that currently exist – barriers to care that I would like to see come to an end.

In closing, I would be happy to discuss HB 5616 with you and hope we can expect your support in delivering more access to dental health care for the citizens of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

MaryEllen McLoughlin, RDH

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