



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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February 8, 2011

Andrea L. Stillman
Elizabeth B. Ritter
Co-Chairs, Public Health Committee
Room 3000, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Support HB 5045 in Committee

Dear Representatives Stillman and Ritter:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Connecticut Osteopathic Medical Society (COMS) are writing to strongly encourage you to support HB 5045 in Committee.

This bill would require any health care provider who provides direct patient care, in a health care facility, to wear in plain view a photographic identification badge that includes the name of the health care provider and the type of license, certificate or employment title that the health care provider holds within the facility or institution. This would allow patients to quickly identify those health care providers who are involved in their direct care.

The AOA proudly represents its professional family of more than 70,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs); promotes public health; encourages scientific research; serves as the primary certifying body for DOs; is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical colleges; and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities. The COMS is a divisional (state) society of the AOA and represents the interests of osteopathic physicians in the state of Connecticut.

Patients are confused about the differences between various types of health care providers.

They often think that they are seeing a medical doctor, when they are not. A recent survey confirmed patient confusion regarding the qualifications of different health care professionals. For example, 54% of respondents thought that an optometrist was a medical doctor and 41% thought a psychologist was a medical doctor. On the other hand, only 43% of respondents realized that an otolaryngologist is a medical doctor. **Patients deserve clear and accurate information to make informed decisions about who is providing their care.** Moreover, when survey respondents were asked if they would support or oppose legislation to require health care advertising materials to clearly designate the level of education, skill and training of all health care professionals, 87% indicated that they would support such legislation.¹

¹ Baseline & Associates conducted a telephone survey among 850 adults nationwide between November 4–8, 2010. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.4 percent at the 95 percent level.

It should be noted that while COMS is in strong support of requiring health care providers working in facilities or institutions to wear name badges identifying the type of license under which they are practicing, it is COMS's position that physicians in private practice should not be required to wear such name badges, while providing care to patients in their office.

We urge you to act in the best interests of patients by voting "Yes" on HB 5045, which would increase transparency of health care professionals' qualifications for patients so that they can clearly see and make informed decisions about who is providing their care. Please feel free to contact Andrea Garcia, JD, AOA Director of State Government Affairs, at agarcia@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773 ext. 8185 should you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Karen J. Nichols, DO
President, AOA



Darrin D'Agostino, DO
President, COMS

CC: Martin S. Levine, DO, MPH, President-elect
Boyd R. Buser, DO, Chair, Dept. of Government Affairs
James J. Dearing, DO, Chair, Bureau of State Government Affairs
John B. Crosby, JD, Executive Director
Michael Mallie, Associate Executive Director, Membership and Governance
Linda Mascheri, Director, Dept. of State, Affiliate, Socioeconomic and International Affairs
Amy Bolivar, Manager of Executive Projects and Communications
Elizabeth Harano, Executive Director, Connecticut Osteopathic Medical Society