



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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February 22, 2011

Public Health Committee  
Room 3000, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Committee Members:

**The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) is writing to encourage you to amend HB 6374 in Committee.** HB 6374 changes the composition of the Connecticut Medical Examining Board (Board) as well as the manner in which the members are appointed.

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 proposed law maintains that until January 1, 2012, the Board will consist of 9 physicians practicing in the state, including, “one physicians who shall be a member of a graduate of a medical education program accredited by the American Osteopathic Association,” 1 physician assistant licensed and practicing in the state and 5 public members. All 15 members of the Board are appointed by the Governor. The proposed law not only changes who is responsible for appointing the members of the Board, but it also changes the composition of the Board on and after January 1, 2012.

Under the proposed law, the Board will still consist of 15 members. However, it is not specified how many members of the Board will be physicians practicing in the state. Rather, the only specifications include that 3 of the members will be “a representative of a patient advocacy group” and 1 member will be, “an attorney with expertise in the practice of criminal law.” It is the AOA’s position that the proposed law should specify the requirements for the 11 other positions on the Board and specifically clarify how many members are to be physicians (DOs/MDs) practicing in the state. Furthermore, it is our position that the requirement that at least one of the members of the Board be a graduate of a medical education program accredited by the American Osteopathic Association should be maintained.

Medical boards are charged with ensuring that all physicians meet licensure standards and further that the consumers of medical care within the state are protected. The Connecticut Board is a composite board, which licenses both allopathic physicians and osteopathic physicians. As the only two types of fully licensed physicians in this country, standards for their licensure are parallel, yet distinct. The most significant difference between an osteopathic physician and an allopathic

physician are osteopathic principles and practices. Therefore, we ask that osteopathic medicine be properly represented on Board by having at least one seat designated for an osteopathic physician or surgeon. First and foremost, the state medical licensing board's charge is to maintain and protect the public's health. To do so, it needs to start with the broadest scope of knowledge available. Licensing a DO without a full understanding of the education of the physician being licensed undermines the board's ability to meet the state's charge.

Furthermore, reserving at least one seat for an osteopathic physician will ensure that osteopathic medicine is correctly represented when rules are being drafted. The specifics of an osteopathic medical education, training and certification may not be known by the allopathic world. Having a DO on the board would ensure that all language would include the necessary references to osteopathic entities, tests, and requirements that would alleviate having to go back and rework proposed regulations. This would also hold true for specialty board certification and Continuing Medical Education (CME).

Thank you for considering the AOA's views on this important public policy matter. Again, we strongly urge you to **amend HB 6374** to clarify the number of positions on the Board, on or after January 1, 2012, that are designated to physicians practicing in the state as well as to maintain the requirement that at least one of the positions be designated for an osteopathic physician. If you would like to discuss this issue further, please contact Andrea Garcia, JD, AOA Director of State Government Affairs, at [agarcia@osteopathic.org](mailto:agarcia@osteopathic.org) or (800) 621-1773 ext. 8185.

Sincerely,



Karen J. Nichols, DO  
President, AOA

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