

Legislative Testimony
SB 1048 AAC Dental and Healthcare Reform
Public Health Committee
Wednesday, March 2, 2011
Bruce Tandy, D.M.D.

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Dr. Bruce Tandy. I am a private practice general dentist in Vernon and Coventry who treats Medicaid children and adults, participates in the Home by One program, and am one of the leads on the Mission of Mercy project. I am also the Past President of the Connecticut State Dental Association (CSDA) representing over 2400 dentists and members of the dental team who communicate, educate, advocate, and collaborate on oral health issues and provide care to the citizens of Connecticut. I thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you in favor of SB 1048.

Access to oral health care for those individuals who do not have insurance or the financial means to seek treatment has been problematic since I entered practice 30 years ago. We have learned over that time period that oral health and general health is intimately linked to the overall well being of the citizens of Connecticut. We also know that the largest gap in oral healthcare access occurs is in adults. SB 1048 will prevent the influx of a never ending flow of young adults into the state safety net system or not having insurance at all.

In the changing economic environment of this nation, more and more new college graduates have had difficulty finding well paying jobs with healthcare benefits than ever before. Many return home to make ends meet and fail to acquire health insurance due to the cost of an individual policy. As a parent of one of these children, it is much more cost effective and health positive to keep my children on my policy to age 26 and maintain the high level of oral health they have attained after years of continuous care versus potentially receiving adult Medicaid benefits or no care at all.

And what about the children with Medicaid coverage who have been able to utilize the available care provided by the state and the 1200 dentists who participate in the program? We know that the health of these kids is actually very comparable to those with private insurance and casting them out of the safety net at a vulnerable time in their lives may ultimately drive them into the emergency rooms of the state hospitals and drive up the costs of oral healthcare for them and the state adult Medicaid program. Continued preventive care is the key to their long term health.

Passing SB 1048 is an important step in maintaining the oral health gains we have seen over the past 5 years in Connecticut and brings the state in line with the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare act. I strongly urge the support of this strategic healthcare concept.

Respectfully submitted,

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