

Ellen Maus BSN
9 Ferry Road
Hadlyme, CT 06439
860 526-5234
emaus@region18.org
Raised Bill No. 1144

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE TUBE FEEDINGS

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concern regarding opposition to Raised Bill 1144. As a nurse with 35 years of experience, 15 of which have been in the public school system, I feel that this practice would go against the safe and legal practice of school nursing in CT.

A school nurse may receive orders from a physician, a physician's assistant, an advanced practice registered nurse, or a dentist. Trained unlicensed personnel are not allowed to receive medical orders and may only provide specific care under the supervision of a nurse in accordance with the Nurse Practice Act of Connecticut. Unlicensed personnel are not allowed to provide health care under the direction of parents.

Health care in school must be provided by employees of the school district or agency responsible for health services and may be delegated by the school nurse in accordance with state regulations. The school nurse is responsible for using professional judgment to determine the appropriate level of care for each student, including whether or not tasks may be delegated. The determination to delegate must be made on a case by case basis because each student's health condition, response, and need are very individual.

The Board of Nursing Examiners, in a statement issued on October 3, 2007, expressed concern:

- "...that the employment of critical thinking skills, part of the ongoing nursing assessment process, that ...involves...patient assessments as the patient's tolerance to the procedure and providing interventions that may be required during ...procedures...is not a skill expectation of unlicensed...assistants."
- ...concern extended to **tube feeding**, which they also felt was...inappropriate delegation by licensed nurses to unlicensed assistive personnel in a skilled nursing facility."

With this concern applying to skilled nursing facilities, I would think there would be an even greater concern in a school setting.

Section 1, paragraph 1, lines 4 and 5 of Bill 1144, states:

- "assisting with the nursing care of patients **if adequate medical and nursing supervision is provided.**"

For children with feeding tubes:

- The opening and surrounding tissue needs to be cleaned and inspected regularly to prevent infection
- Formula from the tube can back up into the trachea and lungs causing aspiration and consequently possible pneumonia

- Placement of the tube must be checked
- If the feeding formula is too concentrated or given too fast, the child may experience nausea, vomiting, cramping, and bloating
- Elimination problems may occur if the feeding formula is not the right composition or does not provide enough liquid
- The tube itself can irritate the nasal passage, esophagus, or surrounding tissues.

It is my opinion that care must be provided by an employee of the school district who is responsible for the health services in school. Care should not be provided by anyone directed to do so by a parent.

Summary:

I take issue with this proposed legislation regarding unlicensed personnel providing care in school. It conflicts with the Connecticut Nurse Practice Act and compromises the safety of children. A registered nurse is the professional qualified and legally allowed to receive a health care provider's order for treatment or care. A registered nurse determines what will be delegated and to whom. Unlicensed personnel must be supervised by a nurse and provide care that is safe and appropriate, no matter the setting.

Rather than continue to create such legislation, I feel it is in the best interest of our school children to have professional nurses care for them. Rather than pass single issue legislation, would it not be better to insure a standard of care to protect all children as they spend the better part of each day in school?

For the health and safety of children, I urge you to oppose Raised Bill No. 1144