**Legislative Testimony**
**Joint Insurance Committee Public Health Committee, & Human Services Committee**
**HB 6308 AA Establishing The CT Healthcare Partnership**
**SB 921 AA Establishing A State Health Insurance Exchange**
**HB 6305 AAC Implementation Of The SustiNet Plan**
**HB 6323 AA Making Conforming Changes To The Insurance Statutes Pursuant To The Federal Patient Protection And Affordable Care Act, And Establishing A State Health Partnership Program**
**Monday, February 14, 2011**
**Jonathan B. Knapp, DMD**

Good afternoon to the Chairs of the Insurance Committee Senator Crisco & Representative Megna, Chairs of the Public Health Committee Senator Stillman and Representative Ritter, & to the Chairs of the Human Services Committee Senator Musto and Representative Tercyak, my name is Jonathan Knapp and I have been practicing dentistry for 18 years in the town of Bethel. I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony to you in support of HB's 6305, and 6323.

I commend the General Assembly for tackling the issue of rising health care costs and access to appropriate care as evidenced by the bills before you today. I would like to draw your attention to, and urge your support for, several specific points included in HB6305 and HB6323.

In HB6305, lines 825-834 discuss a plan called "SustiNet G" which must include "comprehensive, commercial-style benefits, including vision, dental...with an emphasis on prevention that includes encouraging individual responsibility for controllable health risks ..." Dentistry is a profession that has its most significant roots and notable accomplishments in prevention. Water fluoridation and oral health education have been cornerstones in dentistry for many decades now. With that backdrop in mind, I urge you to support efforts to discourage behaviors, such as consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and junk foods, which have significant negative impact on oral health. Conversely, routine preventive dental visits and oral health literacy education must be encouraged. Lines 1370-1375 refer to: "...dental care coverage that shall be comparable in scope to the median coverage provided by large employers in the Northeast states." I urge you to support such efforts to make appropriate dental coverage available to more families given the growing evidence of the strong connections between oral health and overall health.

HB6323 calls for the provision of coverage to dependent children to the age of 26. In its current form, this bill provides for very limited coverage of dental procedures to include only oral surgical procedures to remove impacted teeth. I urge you to consider the inclusion of a broader array of oral health services in addition to the medical coverage extension to age 26. As noted above, the body of evidence linking oral health to overall health is growing daily. There are links between poor oral health and diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and pre-term and low birth weight babies. Given the incredible costs to society generated by these conditions, it makes sound fiscal sense to provide for preventive dental services that dramatically reduce those expenditures.

In closing, I would like to again thank the Committees for allowing me to submit testimony. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by phone or email.

Sincerely,

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