

Donna Kosiorowski RN MS NCSN
3 Henry Drive
Shelton, Connecticut 06484
203-929-4019 (phone)
skosiorowski@snet.net
Raised Bill No. 1144

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE TUBE FEEDINGS.

Good morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Welch, Representative Perillo and members of the Public Health Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Raised Bill 1144. As a nurse with 40 years of experience, 26 years of which have been as a school nurse and a school nurse supervisor, this goes against the safe and legal practice of nursing in Connecticut.

A registered nurse is the professional allowed to receive orders from “a physician licensed under chapter 370, an advanced practice registered nurse licensed to prescribe in accordance with section 20-94a or a physician assistant licensed to prescribe in accordance with section 20-12d.” Trained, unlicensed assistive personnel are not allowed to receive 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, Health Department, or agency responsible for health services under the supervision of a school nurse and as delegated by such nurse. Health care cannot be provided by persons from outside of the district or agency who are not employed by such district or agency.

The school nurse is responsible for using professional judgement to determine the appropriate level of care for each student, including whether or not tasks can be delegated. The determination to delegate must be made on a case by case basis because each student’s health condition, response and needs are different.

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.”

If this concern applies to skilled nursing facilities, how much greater is the concern in a school setting?

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

- “assisting in the nursing care of patients **if adequate medical and nursing supervision is provided.**”

For children with feeding tubes:

- The opening and surrounding tissue need to be cleaned and inspected regularly to prevent infection.
- Formula from the tube can back-up into the trachea and lungs causing aspiration 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.
- Diarrhea or constipation can occur if the feeding is not the right composition or does not provide enough liquid.
- The tube itself can irritate the nasal passage, esophagus, or surrounding tissues.

Care must be provided by employees of the district, Health Department or agency responsible for health services in school. Care cannot be provided by anyone directed to do so by a parent.

Summary of the Issue

The issue with this legislation regarding unlicensed personnel providing care in school 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, is it not in the best interests of our school children to have professional school 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 number 1144.