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Testimony on Raised Bill 1178

**AAC THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DIABETES WHILE AT SCHOOL.**

This testimony is being offered in **opposition** to Raised Bill 1178 AAC the Care and Treatment of Students with Diabetes While at School.

I am a registered nurse, an advanced practice registered nurse as well as a nationally certified school nurse. I am a past president of the Association of School Nurses of Connecticut and past executive board member of the National Association of School Nurses.

The students in the state of Connecticut deserve the best care that we can provide for them. The nurse practice act in Connecticut exists for the public safety. The Connecticut Nurse Practice Act does not allow for unlicensed personnel to administer medications except in specific circumstances covered by law or regulation. Education law allows certain people to administer medications to students in school, but injectable medications, except for medications delivered by cartridge injector, are not allowed for good reason.

Medication errors are more common in the administration of medications to children. In early March a six year old boy in Texas was given too much of a powerful heart medication by an unlicensed substitute who was working in a school nurse's office. She administered 12 milliliters of the medication when the dose should have been 0.6 milliliters; that is twenty times the dose he should have received, a potentially fatal dose! The student ended up in the hospital for three days. The substitute had received an entire days training with the head of nursing, practiced administering medication and then spent another half day on site with a school nurse. The mistake was still made. An overdose of insulin can be immediately fatal. Once medication is injected you cannot get it back.

Insulin syringes come in three types U-100 (100 units in 1cc), U-50 (50 units in ½ cc) and U-30 (30 units in 3/10 cc). If that were not confusing enough, there are a number of types of insulin – Humalog, Novolog, Novolin Reuglar, Novolin Lente, Novolin NPH, Novolin NPH/Regular, Humalin Regular, Humalin 50/50, and Lantus, to name a few. Some are quick acting which should be administered a half hour before eating, others are to be administered immediately before eating, some do not begin to act for a few hours, some last for 24 hours or more. Some students take a combination of insulin which have to be mixed within the syringe. There are 10 different types of prefilled insulin syringes (pens) and many types of insulin pumps which are for both continuous infusion and as needed bolus dosing.

Attached to this testimony are pictures of a few of the types of insulin and insulin pens and the types of insulin syringes. As you can see they are very similar; a medication error waiting to happen.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**

prohibit school districts from discriminating against students with disabilities. School districts are obligated to provide whatever is necessary for students to access their educational programs as adequately as the non-disabled students. **Allowing unlicensed persons to provide diabetes care to students in lieu of a school nurse would be lowering the standard of care.**

Connecticut has the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest ratio of students to school nurses in the country. 85% of our schools have a full time school nurse. According to federal antidiscrimination law any school that does not have a school nurse would be required to provide the nursing services that a student with diabetes requires.

In 2008 the American Nurses Association et al. sued the California Superintendent of Public Instruction to prevent unauthorized persons from giving insulin to children in the California school system. The Superior Court and the Third Court of District Appeals upheld the existing statutory matrix governing the administration of medication by licensed health professionals in California schools. The case is now being appealed for the third time by the California Department of Education and the American Diabetes Association. The California Supreme Court agreed to review this decision.

The students in Connecticut deserve the best care that we can provide for them. Allowing unlicensed personnel to administer a medication as potentially dangerous as insulin does not provide the best care for our students. Instead of trying to find a way around best nursing practice we should be making sure that every student has access to a qualified school nurse.

**In the best interest of the students of Connecticut, please do not allow this bill to move forward.**

