

Verna Bernard-Jones, RN, MS, NCSN

480 Matthew Street

Prospect, CT. 06712

Opposition to SB 1178 - AAC The Care And Treatment of Students With Diabetes While At School

March 21, 2011

As a school nurse in the city of Hartford for 17 years I have cared for many diabetic students. I am also a per diem Nursing Supervisor in an acute care hospital; therefore I have a dual perspective on the diabetic patient.

The diabetic student and patient of any age present one of the great challenges for the health profession. In the hospital Insulin must be double checked by 2 registered nurses before being given to a patient. This is because even the slightest incorrect dosage of 1 unit or less can have grave consequences. It can be fatal.

In the school setting students come with a variety of insulin therapy, from one time injection to continuous dosage given through a pump. There are several different types of insulin from regular short acting to long acting that last as long as 24 hours. Some students need a combination of both that must be drawn up in the same syringe. Students may need "coverage" depending on their blood glucose, urine test or carbohydrate intake. The nurse must know the signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia versus hyperglycemia, the causes and what to do to immediately correct it. This is why the Nurse Practice Act is very specific as to the circumstances when an unlicensed person can administer medication. None of these include injectable medication that is not pre prepared in a cartridge injector and dispensed by a pharmacist and specifically labeled such as an epi-pen.

The newly diagnosed diabetic student and parent must undergo several days and hours of diligent training and demonstration of competency before giving insulin without the supervision of a nurse. It is very unlikely that the unlicensed school personnel will be given the time and training needed for the expertise needed to do this in a crisis. The other factor is who would train this person and how. I would venture to guess that the school nurse would not have the time to do this nor want the responsibility of doing this.

I have spoken with many of my fellow nurses and they find this bill frightening and upsetting not only because this bill overlooks the knowledge and training nurses need to provide proper care for the diabetic student in the school setting but it would put students at great risk.

Please Vote No for this Bill.