

Legislative Testimony
HB 5243 An Act Concerning The use of Mercury in Dentistry
March 7, 2012
John J. Mooney, DMD

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Committee, my name is Dr. Jack Mooney; I am a general dentist from Putnam, Connecticut since 1989 and Chair of the CSDA's Access to Care Committee. My practice has over 700 Medicaid patients in it and I also have participated with Generations which is a Federally Qualified Health Clinic based in Willimantic. I am here today to strongly urge rejection of HB 5243.

Dental amalgam as you'll read from other testimony has been exhaustively studied through the years and all these studies confirm that dental amalgam remains a safe viable cheap method to restore carious or broken down dentition. No alternative restorative material has as much forgiveness to be used in the wet sometimes bloody environment of that dentist encounter in the oral cavity. All other alternative materials have significant limitations. Some of those limitations include creating an effective environment to competently place the material and also the costs associated when using alternative materials.

In my capacity as Chair of the CSDA's Access to Care Committee, eliminating the use of dental amalgam will have significant effects on Medicaid and private insurance patients. Currently the state will only pay for the placement of dental amalgam on adult posterior teeth. As a provider for this population I can tell you first hand that this is a safe and appropriate restoration to place and I see no reason given the states current fiscal health that more expensive alternatives need to be considered. Worse, if this bill passes my educated guess is that the state will not raise fees to offset the cost of alternative materials and many save able teeth will be referred for extraction. For the patient who is privately insured please be cognizant that many insurance companies only reimburse dentists for the lowest cost clinically safe proven material. If this bill passes, those patients will be forced to pay significantly higher out of pocket costs and introducing cost as a barrier to care to them.

Dental amalgam remains a remarkably safe low cost appropriate dental material to use. Please reject HB5243 and preserve the patients right to choose this material.

Respectfully submitted,

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