

Bonhomme, Penny

From: spokorne@bridgeport.edu
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 11:56 PM
To: PHC Testimony
Cc: cmbrdh@gmail.com
Subject: HB 5441 - Support of the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner

To Whom It May Concern:

The Fones School of Dental Hygiene Class of 2012 would like to extend our support for the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) and provide you with some facts we find important to be acknowledged. In our educational experiences on our public health rotations in elementary schools, geriatric facilities, community health clinics as well as our own public health clinic here at the University of Bridgeport, we have found that there is a general lack of access to dental care in underserved communities. To help bridge this gap in dental public health settings, the introduction and establishment of a mid-level dental practitioner would help immensely.

The ADHP, the proposed public health mid-level dental practitioner in bill HB5541, parallels the medical health care model's mid-level Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). The initial concept of the APRN was also a concern within the medical field among doctors and advocating nurses. Initially promoted as a public health role, the APRN is now a fundamental position in providing health care. Educationally the ADHP is also similar to an APRN in that it would be obtained through a Master's Degree program in which a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) who has already acquired a Baccalaureate Degree would be in a position to further their education and advance in their profession.

Aside from the educational foundation of the ADHP, there are several noticeable barriers to care that have been encountered where the public is concerned. On a regular basis there is a critical inability for the public to receive the preventative and immediate restorative care they need to maintain their oral and overall health. A few of these barriers to care of note are transportation, insurance (none or lack of coverage), cost of services, education, health maintenance awareness, and language among others from our observations. Having the ADHP in place would assist in eliminating some of these barriers by making oral health care more accessible via the public health setting.

Overall, as a new generation of dental hygiene care providers, it is important for us to convey the importance of and our support for the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner. Having this opportunity for advancement not only will allow us to progress ourselves professionally, but it will help uphold and maintain the foundation upon which our profession is based: prevention of oral disease and education of the public. Dental hygiene is a profession that was built in Connecticut and we hope you will help give us the opportunity to move forward. By doing so, we can be much more efficient in continuing to help the people of Connecticut in need become healthier and afford them the ability to get the help they need, when they need it.

Please support us, our profession, and the people of Connecticut by supporting the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner.

Sincerely,

The Fones School of Dental Hygiene at the University of Bridgeport Class of 2012