

Legislative Testimony
Public Health Committee
HB5541 AAC Services Provided by Dental Professionals and Certification for Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner
Wednesday, March 21st, 2012
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Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health committee, my name is Neil Goodkind and I have been practicing dentistry for twenty nine years as a general dentist in the town of Stratford, Connecticut. Additionally I have been involved with CT Mission of Mercy and have provided countless hours of charitable care. As past President of the Greater Bridgeport Dental Association I have worked with our Association and the Southwestern Area Health Education Center to provide charitable dental care by forty of our local member dentists in the Give Kids a Smile Program just in the Bridgeport Area. I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony to you in opposition to HB 5541.

I would like to start out by stating that as a product of the Department of Public Health's scope of practice process, for which my professional organization supported, I am in support of allowing licensed dentists to delegate to assistants the fabrication of temporary restorations as referenced in line 113 if this bill.

This is a competency that many states already allow for and could have an immediate impact on access and utilization. I am also in favor of Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries that allow dental assistants having mastered Oral Hygiene Instruction and Prophylaxis (Dental Cleanings) be permitted to use this knowledge for the betterment of the public.

However, I am most strongly opposed to sections 3 through 6 which attempt to create an "Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner." I am also opposed to a Dental Hygienist being able to practice and bill independently and to triage and diagnose as in line 22 of the proposed bill.

Diagnosis and Treatment Planning is by far the most important aspect of dentistry. It requires knowledge that is obtained in a 4 year dental school and thinking skills that come from having the best and the brightest come from 4 years of college before dental school. This cannot be taught in a 2 year program in a Hygiene School or Community College that is not even associated with a dental school or dental professors.

As the Department of Health commented,

"More specifically, utilization for restorative care is particularly problematic. DSS also indicated that reimbursement for services provided by a new provider type such as the ADHP would be available however Federal reimbursement laws direct that a State cannot create a new provider type to provide services solely for the Medicaid population; the new provider type would have to be authorized to provide services to individuals who have commercial insurance as well as the uninsured, in addition to the Medicaid population."

Dental Services in the State of Connecticut is of the highest quality. This is due to the large number of General Practitioner's with knowledge and background diagnosing, treating, and referring. Many of these General Practitioners, such as myself, do most aspects of dentistry including Endodontics, Periodontics, Oral Surgery, Preventive, Restorative Dentistry and Implant treatments. We have made a dental home for our patients and Connecticut dentist's truly care about these patients.

ADHP as suggested by the ADHA in this act would disrupt the referring process and greatly diminish the quality of care in Connecticut.

There is currently no need for the ADHP model. This is likely why only Minnesota has passed anything even remotely similar to the ADHP concept. The ADHP model could even potentially end up costing the citizens of Connecticut more for dental care!

In summary the current dental care system in Connecticut works and ADHP as proposed in this bill is not the answer for access to care at the expense of quality of care.

In closing, I would like to again respectfully thank the members of the Public Health committee for allowing me to submit this testimony and would urge you to oppose this bill. If you should have any questions I will do my best to make myself available at your convenience.

Sincerely,

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