



A Union of Professionals
AFT Healthcare

**Testimony of
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Hartford Federation of Teachers Health Professionals
AFT Local 1018 A/B**

SB 369

**AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION FOR THE USE OF FEEDING TUBES AND
ANTIEPILEPTIC MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL SETTINGS**

Members of the Public Health Committee,

I am Verna Bernard-Jones and I am a school nurse at West Middle School in Hartford. I'm also President of the Hartford Federation of Teachers Health Professionals, a local union representing 65 school nurses and health professionals employed in the Hartford school district. I am writing testimony in opposition to RB 369.

Last year legislation was passed allowing students to carry epi-pens and asthma inhalers while in school. The majority of school nurses feel that this is good and in fact NASN supports federal legislation that would allow this in all schools. In Connecticut this is only allowed with the signature and approval of the medical provider, the school nurse and the parent. The school nurse and medical provider assess the student and determine if he/she is capable of doing this without supervision. The difference between this and other anti-epileptic medication is that these are pre-filled syringe and measured metered doses while medications such as *Diastat* which is the medication used for many children in school, requires assessment of the patient, dosage verification and manipulation of the syringe. Proper positioning of patient, administering of the medication and 1:1 monitoring of vital signs, heart rate and mental status is also required for a period of time. The patient must also be assessed to see if a second dose of medication needs to be given. Nursing training, skilled nursing care, critical thinking and the nursing process are all involved.

Tube feeding on the surface may appear to be a simple task that require little or no training , however, like most nursing intervention constant assessment and reevaluation is often necessary as complications can and do occur. Frequently students that require tube feedings in school also have other health concerns. The nurse is trained to handle these while an unlicensed person is not. *Tube feeding requires assessment for proper absorption of the feeding, observation for distention of the abdomen during and post feeding, evaluation of bowel sound and peristalsis, skin integrity, pain or cramping, and irrigation of the feeding tube to prevent or deal with blockage.* These are not task that should be delegated to an unlicensed person. Critical thinking and implementation of the nursing

process, the skills that only a trained, licensed nurse possess, are needed to ensure the proper care of these students.

For the same reasons, we urge you to oppose Substitute HB 5348, which passed the Education Committee and was sent to the Public Health Committee on March 14th. It allows diabetic children to self-administer glucagon or insulin under the supervision of non-licensed staff. Thank you.