



**CONNECTICUT DENTAL
ASSISTANTS ASSOCIATION**

Public Health Committee

Public Hearing: Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Please Support Section 2 of House Bill 5541 – An Act Concerning Services Provided by Dental Professionals and Certification for Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioners.

The Connecticut Dental Assistants Association (CDAA) represents dental assistants who practice across the state in dental offices and public health facilities.

During the past several years, members of the CDAA have worked very hard with professionals at the Department of Public Health (DPH) and many dental professionals to develop a legislative proposal to allow dental assistants to receive the appropriate education and training to provide more high-quality dental services to more people across Connecticut.

We thank the members of the Legislature's Public Health Committee for raising the provisions of Section 2; and we respectfully request the Committee to approve this proposal. Going forward, we respectfully request the opportunity to amend the language contained in lines 72-75 of the bill to explain that the 3 areas of expanded functions that require clinical instruction are preventative functions, restorative functions and orthodontic functions.

For your consideration, the following are the reasons to support legislation that promotes Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries (EFDAs):

The Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliary helps meet labor market needs in allied dental personnel.

- The Connecticut Department of Labor 2002-2012 statistics projected 154 annual openings for the dental assisting profession with 57 of these positions attributed to annual growth. Ninety Seven annual openings can be attributed to turnover of employed dental assistants. This shortfall in the dental assistant workforce is expected to worsen based upon the Connecticut Department of Labor projections for 2008-2018 to include a growth rate of 22.7% with an annual job opening rate of 146 positions. This dental assisting workforce shortage is a National trend that has already been addressed by most

states and the American Dental Assistants Association/Dental Assisting National Board (ADAA/DANB) through their 2005 National Model.

- Provides a career ladder for retention of dental assistants and new employment opportunities.
- EFDA legislation is consistent with the ADAA/DANB National Model to address our State's workforce needs in providing adequate dental services to our citizens.
- EFDA law is a proven cost effective means to increase utilization capacity through efficient training of an already existing underutilized workforce.
- The labor substitution model through EFDA law has been proven in over 40 states and in practice in some states such as Ohio for over 30 years.
- EFDAs have also been utilized by the US Military for approximately 40 years. The United States Dental Command (DENCOM) studies "showed productivity increases of between 92% and 155% over baseline."

The increased capacity to provide needed dental services through Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliary laws could only have a positive impact on the citizens most in need.

- The implementation of EFDAs can improve capacity for public care by providing practitioners with more time to treat currently underserved populations to include the elderly, special needs citizens, and Medicaid recipients.
- EFDA utilization can improve efficiency in delivery of dental care in non-profit settings
- As stated in *Every Smile Counts: The Oral Health of Connecticut's Children* in the December 2007 Connecticut Department of Health report, in 1996, children between 5 and 17 years of age missed 1, 611, 000 school days due to acute dental problems. Utilization of EFDAs in school based clinics under the direct supervision of a dentist and/or dental hygienist can provide needed dental care in an effective manner by making care accessible. Eliminating the need for reappointments and travel/transportation barriers to care.

Increase in public safety

- Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliaries would first be required to become Certified Dental Assistants through the Dental Assisting National Board. EFDAs would have to be certified in Infection Control, Radiation Health and Safety, and General Chairside skills that are not currently mandated.
- As CDAs, Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliaries would be mandated to lifelong learning (12 continuing dental education credits per year and hold a current DANB-accepted CPR certification) in order to maintain their CDA and EFDA certification status.
- Written examinations for Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliary certification will also be provided by the Dental Assisting National Board.

- EFDA education programs will be required to have a minimum number of classroom, laboratory, and clinical training hours and provide for competency for each task at the laboratory and clinical levels.
- EFDA education and clinical training will be provided by an institution that currently has a Commission on Dental Accreditation program (Dental, Dental Hygiene, or Dental Assisting).
- All of the tasks allowed to be performed by EFDAs are reversible procedures.
- EFDAs will work and perform EFDA procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF SECTION 2 OF HOUSE BILL 5541.

The Connecticut Dental Assistants Association