

Legislative Testimony
Public Health Committee
HB5541 AAC Services Provided by Dental Professionals and
Certification for Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner
Wednesday, March 21st, 2012
Jeffrey A. Simpson D.M.D.

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health committee, my name is Dr. Jeffrey Simpson, and I have been practicing dentistry for 11 years in the town of Putnam, and a total of 15 years in Connecticut since my graduation from the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine in 1997. Additionally, I have volunteered at the annual Connecticut Mission of Mercy for the past 4 years, and will be there as lead of the anesthesia clinic later this week, am one of the over 1300 dentists who provide services to the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership (formerly known as HUSKY) with over 700 adults and children who are on this program as active patients of record in my practice, open the doors of my office for the annual Give Kids a Smile Program, and provide countless hours of pro-bono and reduced fee care annually to members of my local community. I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony 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 hygienists to perform Interim Therapeutic Restorations (IRT) as referenced briefly in line 223 of this bill, and for allowing hygienists and dental assistants to become Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries which is in section 2 of this bill. These are competencies and roles that numerous states already allow for and could have an immediate impact on access and utilization. However, I am staunchly opposed to sections 3 through 6 which attempt to create an "Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner."

Since the cooperative work between the Connecticut State Dental Association, members of the Connecticut Legislature and large numbers of currently practicing dentists in the State of Connecticut since 2008 remarkable strides have been made with respect to increasing access to care for so many citizens of the State of Connecticut to the point where nationwide Connecticut is looked at as the model of how it "can be done." In Connecticut now, the utilization of dental care for those enrolled Connecticut Dental Health Partnership is essentially equal to the utilization rate of citizens of Connecticut who have private dental insurance (approximately 60%).

As dentists, a core tenant of our education process is to make our diagnoses and then formulate treatment plans based on facts. As much as emotion can often be injected into the equation, the bottom line is that facts trump emotion when we look at results. I strongly feel that the repeated attempt to create an Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner a purely emotional response that ignores the facts on the hope that an ADHP will somehow be able to deliver care, in a self sufficient way, at a cost less than a dentist can. I would ask that the members of the Public Health Committee ask themselves the following question as you're contemplating how you'll vote on HB 5541: Will an Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner be able to purchase a dental

chair, dental headpiece(drill), dental instruments, dental restorative materials, office space, electricity, etc. at a cost less than a dentist can? Will an Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner be receiving reimbursement rates any different than a dentist will? How then, without significant financial help from the State of Connecticut legislature will an Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner be able to deliver care more affordably than a Connecticut licensed dentist can?

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,

Jeffrey A. Simpson, D.M.D.
Northeast Connecticut Dental Associates
227 Pomfret Street
Putnam, CT 06260
(860) 963-7676
Jasdmd0@lycos.com