

ADHP Curriculum Testimony

**As Dean of the University of Bridgeport – Fones School of Dental Hygiene I am here to speak in support of the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) as proposed in HB 5541.**

**ADHP would serve as a new member of the oral health care team, working as a mid-level provider akin to the nurse practitioners, physicians’ assistants, nurse midwives, and physical therapists. All have been in CT practice for years and have made a significant positive impact on the delivery of health care in the United States. The ADHP will be no different.**

**Educated at the Master’s degree level, the ADHP will be licensed, educated, and trained to administer preventive and select operative therapies. In addition to clinical skills, ADHPs would be educated in health promotion, disease prevention, case management, practice management, quality assurance, and evidence-based practice and ethics. They would be trained to work with a diverse patient population in a variety of public health settings.**

**Based on passed legislation here in CT, the University of Bridgeport is committed to developing and implementing a proposed 18-24 months Master’s degree curriculum.**

- Pre-requisite requirements for the program include a**
- BS degree in dental hygiene or other health related field**
- CT dental hygiene licensure (including local anesthesia)**
- Minimum of 1000 hours of clinical dental hygiene practice.**

**The educational framework is similar to that of a dental curriculum in areas where similarities in scope of practice occur, thereby providing comparable patient and public safety. Clock hours and competencies are similar in course work, lecture content, laboratory requirements and clinical experiences for those procedures on mid level practice. The similarities in clock hours per subject area are shown here on a table from data published by an American Dental Association biennial report that provides information on the instruction, laboratory, and patient care activities at all 56 Unites States dental schools.**

Average Clock Hours	Dental School	ADHP
Dental Clinical Sciences	3,557	3,237
Community Based Patient Care	132	400
General and Oral Pathology	198	201
Periodontics	301	314

Pharmacology	85	102
Oral Diagnosis and Treatment Planning	202	111
Dental Public Health and Special Needs	121	253
Dental Emergencies	70	62
Anesthesiology/Pain Control	57	54
Total Average Clock Hours	4,723	4,734

The proposed ADHP curriculum also requires a residency program and completion of a comprehensive competency based clinical examination. Continued competency must be achieved throughout the process of the program. During the required residency, student clinicians will work closely with dentists and other dental team members.

The University of Bridgeport – Fones School of Dental Hygiene has a strong history of collaboration with dental school faculty and dental public health clinicians and administrators.

Dentists will be actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the advanced dental hygiene practitioner curriculum.

The University of Bridgeport is not the only American university to develop a curriculum for advanced dental hygiene practice.

In 2009, the Minnesota State Legislature passed legislation establishing a midlevel oral health provider in state statute - enabling students who are educated under the ADHP model to become licensed to practice. A Master's degree education program at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul, Minnesota began in fall 2009 to educate dental hygienists to practice as mid-level providers. The first class is slated to graduate and begin mid level clinical practice in May 2011.

Mid-levels in oral health care are not a new concept—currently over 40 countries, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK have mid-level oral health care providers in place.

I urge the Public Health Committee to support HB 5541. The bill would help make oral health care more accessible to those currently disenfranchised from the oral health system, helping reduce dental disease in the State of Connecticut.