

**Legislative Testimony**  
**Public Health Committee**  
**HB5541 AAC Services Provided by Dental Professionals and**  
**Certification for Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner**  
**Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012**  
**Ron Lindin, D.D.S.**

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Slossberg, Representative Lyddy, Senator Welch, Representative Perillo and members of the Public Health committee, my name is Dr. Ron Linden. I am a general dentist with a private practice in Shelton, CT. I have been in private practice for 32 years.

I have been in front of legislative panels in the past, testifying on behalf of the efforts Connecticut dentists have made in regards to access to care issues. My relevant credentials, besides being in practice for a number of years, have been in the area of chairing the state dental society's ethics committee, and as a founding member of the Derby Dental clinic.

I am here to speak in opposition to the advanced dental hygiene practitioner act, mostly because I care deeply about dentistry and our ability to deliver the highest quality services that we can to the public. I do not believe that an ADHP will have the capabilities to deliver excellence on many of the services that the hygiene association would like us to believe.

Dentistry is a very hard discipline. We work at almost microscopic levels. Take a dental filling, for example. It looks like a seemingly innocuous, simple procedure - make a hole in a tooth, remove decay or an old filling, and replace it.

Say we slip, or make an error, of a 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an inch too far in one direction. . We would turn that simple filling into a nerve penetrating infection. That 200-dollar filling could turn into a 2000-dollar procedure to preserve that tooth.

Further, we are using a rapidly spinning sharp instrument, namely the dental drill. 1/10 of an inch too far in another direction and we can lacerate a tongue or a cheek. I can apply the same thinking to errors in removing teeth. Teeth can fracture during removal, or bleeding can become a problem, or tissue can be lacerated.

It may not be difficult to do many dental surgical procedures with enough practice, but what is difficult is not getting into trouble while doing it and knowing what to do if you do get into trouble. That knowledge requires not only a dental school education, but also a whole lot of experience and education beyond the school walls.

This act would legalize surgery for a non-doctoral candidate. I would be hard pressed to find any doctoral profession in health care that allows those without a doctor's degree to perform significant irreversible surgical procedures.

Dentistry is a difficult profession. I have to relentlessly practice my craft over all these years, not only to stay up to date but to keep proficient. I work with magnifiers and a strong headlight. I have to make sure my hands are steady, and the patient is as well. It, in fact, takes me longer to do many of the procedures I have repeatedly done for 30 + years than it used to, because as I learn more, I see more procedures that I need to improve on.

And this applies not only to myself but to dentists as a whole. Our field is changing so fast that it takes considerable time just to keep up, let alone to become proficient in what we already know.

I care deeply about doing the right thing for patients. That is the essence of the code of conduct that we work under. As chairman of the CSDA ethics committee, I have fielded many questions from dentists, inquiring about ethical dilemmas. And the consistent message I have received from these dentists is that THEY want to do the right thing and correct anything that is not up to proper standards.

The state dental association, which represents these dentists, does not believe it is in the best interest of the public to allow extractions, fillings or any other dental surgery, to be done by anyone other than an individual who holds a dental doctoral degree, namely the dentist.

You may think this opposition stems from economic self-interest. While I suppose that this may be true for small number of us, I am sure that the interest we are really protecting is the publics' interest. Our oath tells us to do no harm. If you vote to allow this bill for ADHP to pass, you must be very sure that what you are allowing will do no harm as well.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Ron Linden  
163 Leavenworth Road  
Shelton, CT 06484  
(203) 929-4524  
[RL238@cornell.edu](mailto:RL238@cornell.edu)