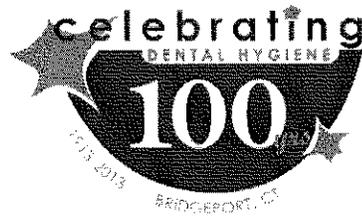


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**Celebrating 100 Years of Dental Hygiene in 2013!**



**Re: Raised Bill #5541**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Slossberg, Representative Lyddy and Members of the Public Health Committee;

I am a Registered Dental Hygienist in the state of Connecticut speaking in favor of **Raised Bill #5541, specifically the proposal of the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner**. I have been a dental hygienist for more than 30 years, and am currently a full-time educator of dental hygiene students at the University of Bridgeport, Fones School of Dental Hygiene. As a long-time clinician providing services to Connecticut citizens, and an educator, I have the perspective of seeing the need for the creation of a provider which is **built on the tradition of excellence and service of a licensed, educated provider**.

In the 30-chair Fones Dental Health clinic, as well as the outreach community sites I visit with my students, I can attest to the dental needs I see going unmet on a daily basis due to cost, utilization and accessibility of services. The placement of mid-level provider, educated to the **competencies set forth in great detail by the American Dental Hygienists Association, and a curriculum outlined to meet the competencies for these services which correlate to those set forth by the Council on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association**, the **Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner** can fill a gap in the dentistry which is akin to the Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant in medicine.

This new, mid-level provider holds great promise in improving access to care for dental services for the **underserved, underinsured and uninsured children and adults in our state**. Since 1913, dental hygienists have been providing primary, preventive services as part of the dental team, under general supervision in many public health dental care settings, **often without the physical presence of the dentist**. In providing additional palliative, restorative and preventive services, with **appropriate referral to the dentist as needed as well as yearly exams and a strong referral mechanism**, there is an opportunity to meet the existing and growing need for affordable services this mid-level can provide. Because dental hygienists often see patients in **settings where a dentist is not always present**, early intervention can provide a critical step in preventing dental disease, pain, tooth loss, and possible emergency room visits.

It is my hope that all members of the dental team support quality dental care by **qualified, licensed professionals**. Our patients deserve nothing less!

Very Sincerely Yours,

**Sandra Stramoski, RDH, MSDH**