

Testimony to the Public Health Committee

Regarding: SB 993:

AN ACT CONCERNING Dental Assistants and Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary (EFDA)

March 13, 2013

Submitted by: MaryEllen McLoughlin, RDH

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and Members of the Public Health Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to review this bill.

My name is MaryEllen McLoughlin and I am a licensed, registered dental hygienist living in Stamford, CT. I have practiced for over 40 years in both a general and a periodontal dental office. I currently work full-time in a public healthcare setting and part-time in private practice office.

Please defeat or amend this bill on my behalf.

As written, this bill allows the EFDA to perform many functions, which should only be performed by a licensed practitioner. In some states the EFDA is a two year associate's degree. This proposed legislation leaves too much room for open interpretation. This will not protect our residents. The EFDA language needs to be amended to protect the public.

Please amend the EFDA language or defeat this bill.

There is no monitoring of private dental offices but public health settings are credentialed and inspected often and follow tight guidelines and policy.

In private practice, the dentist deems what is an advisable procedure. If something goes wrong, it often goes unreported. Many of my colleagues are not submitting testimony because if they do their jobs will be in jeopardy. In my opinion, this is another ploy to make money off the backs of the least paid employees. It will lead to "factory – type" dentistry; mistreating a population that may not know any better.

The ADHP will add a new member to the dental team, not replace anyone. It is time for CT to step up to the plate. After all, CT is the birthplace of dental hygiene.

Please amend the bill to include the ADHP. The ADHP (Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner) will be built upon the knowledge and skills of the RDH (Registered Dental Hygienist) a *licensed* professional just as the nurse practitioner (APRN) was built upon knowledge and skills of the public health nurse and answered the need for cost-efficient, easily accessible primary health care in rural, underserved areas.

Dental Hygienists are already in public health settings providing dental hygiene services. It would be great to work with the dentists in providing oral care to the people in need.

I support the establishment of An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) for CT residents. It is reported that children on Medicaid live within 10 miles of at least two dental providers. 10 miles is a huge barrier, in itself. This report only speaks to children; what about their families, seniors, adults and those with disabilities? What about the uninsured and underinsured. I have patients who come to me because even though they have dental insurance they can't afford the private practice co-pays.

In this economic time, ADHP will help Connecticut and its citizens. While, there may be room for both the ADHP midlevel provider and the expanded function auxiliary; the ADHP is the more comprehensive choice and will create wider access and utilization for health care, which the expanded function auxiliary can not do on its own.

In closing, I would be happy to discuss my concerns with you and hope the citizens of Connecticut can expect your support of the establishment of An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP).

Again, please defeat or amend this bill, on my behalf.

Thanks for your help,
Sincerely,

MaryEllen McLoughlin, RDH

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