

**Legislative Testimony
Public Health Committee
SB 993 AAC Dental Assistants and Expanded Function Dental
Auxiliary
Friday, March 15th, 2013
Dr. Dave Fried**

Dear members of the Public Health Committee.

I am testifying in favor of SB 993, An Act Concerning Dental Assistants and Expanded Function Dental Auxillaries. I have been a general dentist for over 20 years and practice in Wallingford, Ct. I am also retired from the Connecticut Army National Guard, having served as the State Dentist, advising the Adjutant General on Dental matters and providing necessary dental examinations to our service members. I also served for three years on active duty with the United States Air Force.

I feel that establishing the EFDA model is the most efficient method to improve access to care and lower the cost of primary dental care in Connecticut. EFDAs have been practicing successfully in over 30 states. While in the military, I observed, trained and monitored the activities of dental assistants who had been through a short but intensive training course. With their help, dental patients were treated safely and efficiently.

The EFDAs have been practicing in the Army, Navy and Air Force for over 30 years, able to fill and carve amalgam restorations (but not cut teeth), doing radiographic surveys and making and cementing temporary crowns. This type of care is reversible and easily monitored by Dentists. EFDAs do not diagnose or treat any disease processes. Most important, they were also providers of preventive care. The care was efficient, and it was directed toward the correct level of care. The use of EFDAs has been shown to increase efficiencies, and it is reasonable to assume that this will increase access to dental care. At the same time, EFDAs are limited to reversible procedures only, and only under the supervision of a dentist, maintaining the high quality of dental care that we desire for the citizens of Connecticut.

In my experience, EFDAs in the military were able to provide excellent care under the supervision of Dentists. Although they did not have the same level of academics as our civilian hygienists, they had enough training to complete the mission. Preventive care has been the most successful modality in medicine and dentistry in reducing costs and providing a lifetime of benefits. Children miss school and adults miss work as a result of dental problems. Loss of teeth results in a poor appearance, leading to reduced self-esteem and preventing people from getting jobs which require public contact. Tooth pain

is a real debilitator. Teaching patients oral hygiene and applying fluoride are relatively easy procedures, and help to prevent more costly restorative procedures.

It is time for the legislature to modernize the way Dentistry should be performed in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

David L. Fried, DMD

Wallingford, CT