

Testimony to the Public Health Committee  
AN ACT CONCERNING Dental Assistants and Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary (EFDA)

Regarding: SB 993:

March 13, 2013

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

Hello, my name is Colleen Gleason. I am currently a student pursuing a bachelor's degree in Dental Hygiene, at the University of Bridgeport. Throughout my time as a student, I have had the opportunity to work in a variety of public health settings. Personally, I have a special interest, and take great pride in being a part of working at the Fones Dental Hygiene Health Center at Tisdale Elementary School. As public health dental hygienists we have been very effective delivering complete preventative services to all children, but the follow up restorative work goes unmet. During an internship at the Health Center at Tisdale; I, along with 2 of my fellow interns, Ashley Thompson and Brittney Lendroth, re-screened over a hundred children who received referrals in the spring 2012 semester. After collecting and extrapolating the data, I was appalled by the results; less than 1/3 of the children, 31.6% had their dental decay treated. Approximately, 68.4% of these children did not see a Dentist at all to treat their decay. Another alarming fact we discovered was that only 20 children out of approximately, 66 with HUSKY insurance (Medicaid) were treated; only 3 out of 8 children with private insurance were treated, and only 6 out of 20 children with no insurance were treated.

The Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary would NOT solve this access to care issue because of its vague terminology that has been expressed throughout the proposal. Furthermore, EFDA would only adversely affect the dental hygienists already declining job market.

If we were Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner in this public health setting, we could address the restorative issues on the spot. The ADHP is the only mid-level provider model that would allow the provider to function in a public health setting without a Dentist physically present. As I approach graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Dental Hygiene, I look forward to and am eager to hopefully pursue a Master's Degree in ADHP where we would make a true difference in the lives of the children at Tisdale and be able to finally address the public health's access to care issue.