



The Voice of Behavior Analysis in Connecticut

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Testimony of Solandy Forte, CTABA President, Legislative Committee member on behalf of the CTABA Executive Council & Legislative Committee

In Opposition of Section 42 (6) of HB 5537 AAC the Department of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Various Revisions to the Public Health Statues Public Health Committee Friday, March 14, 2014 Public Hearing

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee,

The Connecticut Association for Behavior Analysis (CTABA) is a professional organization that seeks to assist in the development and advancement of the field of behavior analysis within the state of Connecticut through research, education, and dissemination of information. CTABA represents Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) in Connecticut, with a current membership of over 400 persons certified by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) and is an affiliated chapter of the Association of Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) and the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts (APBA). CTABA is honored to represent the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA) in Connecticut.

This testimony is written in opposition of HB 5537, Section 42 (6), raised before the Public Health Committee that would expand the scope of practice of Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP's) to include a provision of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) within Connecticut.

ABA is not currently within the scope of practice of Speech and Language Pathologists. The scope of practice of Speech and Language Pathologists in the State of Connecticut, as written in the Department of Public Health, Chapter 399, Section, 20-408, includes:

"The practice of speech and language pathology" means the application of principles, methods and procedures for the measurement, testing, diagnosis, prediction, counseling or instruction relating to the development and disorders of speech, voice or language or feeding and swallowing or other upper aerodigestive functions for the purpose of diagnosing, preventing, treating, ameliorating or modifying such disorders and conditions in individuals or groups of individuals, and includes screening individuals for hearing loss or middle ear pathology using otoacoustic emissions screening, screening tympanometry or conventional pure-tone air conduction methods, including otoscopic inspection."

Further, as part of the graduation requirements to become a Speech and Language Pathologist, there is no required course work or supervised experience requirements related to Applied Behavior Analysis. These professionals do not have the training, supervised experience, nor have they passed a national examination in behavior analysis to be considered as qualified ABA service providers.

Consumers of ABA services would be negatively impacted by the modification to include ABA services to fall within the scope of practice for Speech and Language Pathologists. It is imperative that consumers of ABA have qualified professionals to provide these services. When unqualified professionals supervise ABA services, consumer protection is jeopardized, there is a risk of lawsuits, and it may result in poor application of ABA methods. More importantly, consumers receiving services by unqualified professionals may not experience the same level of treatment success as those who receive services from those qualified in ABA. By hiring qualified providers of ABA using the standard of the BACB, consumers are ensured the best-practice methods and the best possible treatment success.

Behavior Analysis and the scope of practice of Behavior Analysts have been defined in existing Connecticut legislation, Public Act No. 09-115:

"Applied behavior analysis" means the design, implementation and evaluation of environmental modifications, using behavioral stimuli and consequences, including the use of direct observation, measurement and functional analysis of the relationship between environment and behavior, to produce socially significant improvement in human behavior.

Additionally, any proposed expansion of the scope of practice for Speech and Language Pathologists must first be reviewed in accordance with the Public Act 11-209, An Act Concerning the Department of Health's Oversight Responsibilities Relating to Scope of Practice Determinations for Health Care Professionals.

While this written is in opposition to HB 5537, Section 42 (6), the Connecticut Association for Behavior Analysis (CTABA) is not opposed to those Speech and Language Pathologists who hold a dual credential, that is a both a Licensed Speech and Language Pathologist and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. Those individuals with both credentials have ABA in their scope of practice.