



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Public Health Committee

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**Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA
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Senate Bill 459 - An Act Concerning Medical Assistants

The Department of Public Health offers the following information on Senate Bill 459 for the Committee's consideration.

Senate Bill 459 would authorize licensed physicians/surgeons to delegate medication administration to certain trained medical assistants. Currently, medical assistants are prohibited from administering medications to patients.

In February 2013, the Department of Public Health issued a scope of practice report concerning medication administration by medical assistants after establishing a scope of practice review committee. Although the report found appropriately educated and trained medical assistants can administer medications safely within specific parameters, the proposed bill is not consistent with all of the findings in the report. The Department has also identified other areas of potential concern that should be addressed in any legislation that moves forward. As such, the Department requests the following revisions:

- In line 19, add the following language “or by intramuscular (limited to deltoid, gluteal, and vastus lateralis), intradermal or subcutaneous injection, including,”
- In line 33, remove “routine” as there is no regulatory definition for “routine” surgical procedures;
- In lines 26 through 28, add the following medications to the list of exclusions: “experimental drugs including any drug not having approval of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), or any substance used as an antineoplastic chemotherapeutic agent with the exception of corticosteroids”;
- Clarify the definition of “direct supervision” to include that the physician shall remain on the premises at all times that treatment orders for medication administration are being carried out by a certified medical assistant; be in reasonable proximity to the treatment room; and able to observe, assess and take any necessary action regarding effectiveness, adverse reaction or any emergency;

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- Add language to clarify that the interpretation of results and any assessment components associated with tuberculosis and allergy testing are not within the scope of a medical assistant's practice and must be performed by a licensed health care practitioner with applicable statutory authority;
- Add language to clarify that in addition to ensuring that the medical assistant has the requisite education and training, the supervising physician must be satisfied as to the ability and competency of the medical assistant prior to delegating medication administration and that documentation of the certified medical assistant's qualifications and the physician's ongoing periodic evaluation of the medical assistant's competency in medication administration shall be maintained by the employing physician on the premises;
- Add language to require that the physician shall determine all components of the precise treatment to be given, including the type of medication to be administered, dosage, method and area of administration, and any other factors peculiar to the risks, such as avoidance of administration sites on certain parts of the body, and that the physician shall assure that this information shall be written on the patient's record and made available at all times to the medical assistant carrying out the treatment instructions, who shall also be identified by name and credentials in the patient record on each occasion that medication is administered;
- Add language to require medical assistants to wear a clearly visible identification badge indicating his or her name and credentials; and
- Add language to make clear that a physician shall not transfer his or her responsibility for supervising a medical assistant in the performance of medication administration except to another physician who has knowingly accepted that responsibility and that failure to comply with the provisions of this bill would be grounds for disciplinary action against the physician's license pursuant to section 20-13c of the general statutes.

The Department would welcome further discussion on the issues outlined above. Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.