

Statement Before
Public Health Committee
Wednesday, March 19, 2014

SB 459: An Act Concerning Medical Assistants

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Margherita Giuliano and I am both a pharmacist and the Executive Vice President of the Connecticut Pharmacists Association. The Connecticut Pharmacists Association is a professional organization representing 1,000 pharmacists in the State of Connecticut. I am submitting testimony in *opposition* to SB 459 **An Act Concerning Medical Assistants**.

The proposed legislation would allow medical assistants to administer certain medications, including, but not limited to, the administration of oral medications, inhaled medications and injectable medications including intramuscular, intradermal, and subcutaneous injections. The administration of injectable medications would include the administration of vaccines under the direct supervision of a physician.

While the proposed legislation would require that the medical assistants administer under the **direct** supervision of a physician, we are concerned that the legislature is giving very broad authority to medical assistants. While we value the role of all professionals in the health care field, we do question whether this is a task that medical assistants are qualified and trained to do. A medical assistant degree can be acquired in as little as 12 months. While the legislation requires additional training in order to be able to administer medications, this training pales in comparison to the education that pharmacists, physicians, and nurses must obtain to be licensed as health care providers. These professionals have the extensive knowledge, training, and certification to administer medications and also understand, in detail, the reactions and interactions by which combining medications may result.

At this time, pharmacists are still not allowed to administer medications without a protocol in place- this, in light of the six years of education pharmacists have, focused on medications. To suggest that medical assistants should be able to include the ability to administer medications in their duties is the antithesis of the current trend to advocate for patient-centered and high quality health care for all. It is our concern that this proposed legislation would lower the standards and thus allow individuals with limited education the authority to administer these medications with or without appropriate supervision.

We urge the committee to oppose this legislation. At a time where there is emphasis on safe prescribing and safe use of medications, this shortcut to administer medications, especially those of an injectable nature, will most likely lead to the potential of increased medication errors and adverse drug events, all of which cost the healthcare systems more money to rectify.

Thank you.