



Connecticut Association of Optometrists

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Testimony of Brian T. Lynch, O.D.
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Opposing HB5625: Definition of Surgery

My name is Dr. Brian T. Lynch and I am a practicing Optometrist in Branford, CT and also Legislation Chairman for The Connecticut Association of Optometrists. Both I and the Association oppose HB5625: The Definition of Surgery.

You've heard hindsight is 20/20. My thirty years of history as the Legislation Chairman has equipped me with that clarity as it pertains to HB5625.

This is not groundbreaking legislation. Defining surgery and then restricting it to just an MD was first proposed in Connecticut in 1999. This strategy has been both the AMA National and CSMS local agenda for years. In 1999 according to Dr. Andrew Packer, a Connecticut ophthalmologist, it was the responsibility of policy makers and physicians to define surgery within the medical practice act. The DPH felt it would restrict other professions scope and it was appropriately defeated.

The CSMS tried to resuscitate the definition of surgery in 2013 as SB1038. Their transparent efforts were again seen as an attempt to restrict the scope of other professionals. DPH commissioner Jewel Mullen MD stated "The bill was a scope issue and should be returned to the scope review process." The very same process enthusiastically supported by CSMS in its development.

Here we are sixteen years later, debating the same issue. Despite CSMS' assurance that this is not a scope issue, I believe it is or you wouldn't have so many groups opposing it. It will negatively impact all the Non-MD professionals like mine that perform and bill surgical codes. It will generate more confusion for the patient and insurers as to who can and who can't provide the care they've become accustomed to receiving. It will restrict the current scope of my profession to less than currently defined by statute. This agenda is also designed to thwart the growth of professions as new technologies evolve.

If it is organized medicine's intention to prevent untrained, non-healthcare technicians from using medical devices in a "surgical" application then do just that. Sharpen your scalpel and direct your efforts accordingly. Using such a broad brush will negatively impact my profession, restrict the care I can and will deliver to my patients by the statute responsibly enacted by our legislators.

Please oppose HB5625.