

HB 5625

*Testimony by Debra Sullivan PA-C
Opposing Proposed House Bill 5625
February 23, 2015*

The Honorable Terry B Gerratana & Matthew Ritter
Co-Chairs, Public Health Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Room 3000, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Co-Chairs Gerratana and Ritter and distinguished Committee members,

My name is Debra Sullivan. I am a Board Certified Physician Assistant and have been practicing medicine as a PA for 18+ years. I have completed an elite surgical residency, worked in a labor room for 10 years, an emergency room for 6 years and for the past 2+ years I practice as an aesthetics PA at Newtown MediSpa. In all aspects of my career, I have performed procedures which would fall under the proposed definition of a "surgical procedure".

Additionally, I am an adjunct professor at Bridgeport University and I teach such procedures to my students. During my tenure in medicine, I have been privileged to work beside many mid-level practitioners, PAs and APRNs, who are board certified and medically trained professionals. I have witnessed these practitioners perform procedures such as chest tube insertions and removals on newborns to help save its life, reducing a dislocated shoulder or hip in an ER, administering an epidural or performing a spinal tap, suturing complex lacerations, delivering babies in a labor room and inserting central lines into a patient's jugular vein... All for the care of a patient. All performed safely with proper education and supervision as directed by law. In fact, the law gives the mid-level practitioners the autonomy to perform these lifesaving procedures and provide patient services under the supervision, control, responsibility and direction of a physician, and has done so for decades. Our healthcare system greatly relies on the mid-level practitioners.

So why are we here today?

- It seems that we are here in 2015 to address Proposed Bill HB-5625, to "define surgery".
- We were here in 2014 to address Bill 418 in an attempt to define "Cosmetic Medical Procedures"
- We were here in 2013 to address Bill 1067 in an attempt to regulate medical spas.

How are the above related and what are the consequence to healthcare, patient safety and the economy?

- Bill 1067 was first proposed in 2013 to attempt to propose regulatory standards upon medical spas. However, it placed unfair and unjust limitations upon the scope of practice of mid-level practitioners. The Governor ultimately vetoed Bill 1067 and worked to commission a task force to devise a bill to define regulations for a medical spa as well as define the term "medical spa".
- Bill SB 418 was developed by this task force, consisting of MD's, mid-level practitioners and members of the Public Health Committee. It was developed to ensure patient safety and regulation of MedSpas. This Bill (418) did not favor an MD, a mid-level or a businessman. It merely proposed what was safest for the patients. It defined clearly "Cosmetic Medical Procedures" and it defined the medical training, certifications and supervision required to practice Cosmetic Medical Procedures. SB 418 was developed to ensure that the procedures being performed are safe, effective, performed by trained and qualified personnel, properly supervised and most importantly causing no harm to a patient.
- Currently, proposed Bill HB 5625, is attempting to "define surgery", however, it will thereby redefine "Cosmetic Medical Procedures" as "surgery".
By placing a label of "surgical procedure" on "cosmetic medical procedures", many employed practitioners in medical spas will be unemployable in their current role, patient access to healthcare will be limited and healthcare costs to patients for such procedures will rise.

PAs, APRNs and RN's perform some of the stated Cosmetic Medical Procedures under proper supervision and direction as defined in Bill SB418. For many, performance of such procedures defines their job. The new "definition of surgery" will prohibit the performance of said procedures. It will eliminate their jobs in many hospitals and medical offices. Jobs they have performed safely, effectively with proper supervision and with no harm to patients.

Petitioning to place such a definition into law, proposed Bill HB5625 will circumvent SB418, a well-developed law. Bill HB 5625 will eventually go against everything that the Governor's task force successfully solved in last year's bill 418. It will lead to a limited access to healthcare providers and will change the scope of practice of PAs, not only in medical spas but across the discipline of medicine.

I respectfully request that proposed Bill HB5625 be opposed until it may be reviewed and amended to include a provision to maintain the rights, privileges and scope of practice of professionals as described in SB418 and as authorized in Chapter 370 and 378 of the General statutes.

I also respectfully request the opportunity to be a privileged member of such review committee or task force to further discuss this matter. Thank you for your time and consideration in reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Debra Sullivan PA-C
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