

Testimony of Josephine Colacci, JD
Government Affairs Director
International Association of Healthcare Central Service Materiel Management

Submitted to the Joint Public Health Committee
HB 5913 An Act Concerning Persons Who Decontaminate Medical Instruments
February 20, 2015

Good afternoon, Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Joint Public Health Committee. My name is Josephine Colacci, and I am the Government Affairs Director for the International Association of Healthcare Central Service Materiel Management (IAHCSMM). IAHCSMM serves approximately 21,000 central service technicians in the U.S. and abroad with 145 technicians in Connecticut. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor for 2013, there are 520 central service technicians in Connecticut.

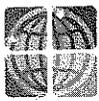
I appear before you this afternoon to speak in support of HB 5913, which would require new central service technicians to be certified and maintain continuing education credits.

Central service technicians are responsible for ensuring that instrumentation and equipment used in surgical procedures are properly cleaned, disinfected, inspected, assembled, disassembled, and sterilized prior to patient use. Clearly, this is a vital component in the delivery of safe patient care.

Members of the committee, a compelling example as to why it is important for the legislature to pass this bill this year can be found in the case of a Westport plastic surgeon. In September 2012, the Hartford Courant reported that this plastic surgeon was fined in 2011 for "serious and repeated lapses" in infection control and instrumentation-sterilization procedures. When DPH revisited this surgeon in the spring of 2012, they found more violations, which again included improper sterilization procedures. I trust you can agree that this case demonstrates how there is a clear and present need for measures that ensure the safe sterilization of instruments and equipment in Connecticut.

As is well known, today's surgical instruments are highly complex; they involve many tiny channels and crevices that can hide debris. The processing of robotics, endoscopes, joint replacement, and related instruments and equipment requires an advanced technical knowledge that only proper certification can provide.

Connecticut passed a bill last year to start tracking surgical site infections, which is the closest data that I can point to on the issue of dirty surgical instruments. In fact, no state tracks whether an infection came from a dirty surgical instrument.



IAHCSMM
Instrumental to Patient Care®

*International Association of Healthcare
Central Service Materiel Management*

Meanwhile, the Center for Disease Control estimates that approximately 1.7 million patients developed healthcare acquired infections (HAIs) in 2002, which resulted in an estimate of 99,000 deaths. This study estimates that 22% or 290,000 of the infections were surgical site infections.

The cost of treating HAIs is estimated to be \$37 to \$45 billion annually. Recently, the University of Michigan analyzed 350 suction tips (used to vacuum up fluids during surgery) for cleanliness and found that 95% of them contained debris after being decontaminated.

Patients receiving surgical services benefit from a more qualified and competent workforce. There is simply no question that the education, training, and assurance of competency of this vital healthcare profession will reduce the incidences of surgical site infections, which in turn results in the reduction of readmissions and surgical complications.

I should point out that New Jersey requires central service technicians to be certified. New York passed similar legislation in 2013 and legislation is pending in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

I have the article published in the Hartford Courant, which is referred to in my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you.

Westport Doctor Again Cited By State

September 14, 2012|By JOSH KOVNER, jkovner@courant.com, The Hartford Courant

A Westport plastic surgeon who was fined \$29,000 last year for serious and repeated lapses in medical care has once again run afoul of state regulators.

Health inspectors in the spring dropped in on Dr. Joel Singer at his Westport surgery suite and found numerous violations of infection-control and instrument-sterilization procedures, as well as gaps in medical records and surgery logs. The inspectors also noted that some of the nurses working during breast augmentations, fat transfers, liposuctions and other procedures lacked the required surgical experience.

In a new consent order signed Aug. 29, and posted on the state Department of Public Health website this week, Singer agreed to hire consultants to monitor nearly every facet of his office and report back to DPH.

The inspectors in the spring went to the Westport Ambulatory Surgery Center to see if Singer and his staff had taken corrective action after a series of violations last year led to \$29,000 in fines against Singer.

Instead, the inspectors found more violations, including exposed trash, improper sterilization procedures, unqualified nurses, and gaps in documentation that made it impossible to verify that surgeries were being conducted properly.

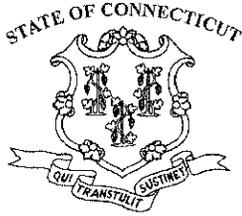
Under the consent order, the consultants will examine the surgery center's management, quality controls, infection controls, medical-record keeping, training and credentialing of nurses, advanced-practice nurses, and doctors in the office, operating-room procedures, drug storage, and maintenance of instruments.

Last year, Singer was sued by a 27-year-old patient who charged that he posted pictures of her enhanced breasts on an office website without her signed authorization. Jury selection in the case is schedule for Oct. 31, according to court records.

Singer was fined \$5,000 in 2005 for leaving major gaps in the surgical record of a breast reduction he performed. The surgical site had become necrotic, which occurs when cells or tissues die. In 1998, his license was placed on probation for a year after he placed implants of different sizes during a breast augmentation.

Since 2009, a medical supply firm and a cleaning company have been awarded over \$10,000 in judgments against Singer for unpaid bills, according to court records.

<http://articles.courant.com/2012-09-14/health/hc-plastic-surgeon-westport-discipline-0915-20120914 1 breast-reduction-nurses-breast-augmentation>



General Assembly

"AN ACT CONCERNING PERSONS WHO DECONTAMINATE REUSABLE MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS OR DEVICES."

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and substitute the
2 following in lieu thereof:

3 "Section 1. (NEW) (Effective January 1, 2016) (a) As used in this
4 section:

5 (1) "Central service technician" means a person who
6 decontaminates, inspects, assembles, packages and sterilizes reusable
7 medical instruments or devices in a health care facility, whether such
8 person is employed by the health care facility or provides services
9 pursuant to a contract with the health care facility, and who (A) has
10 successfully passed a nationally accredited central service exam for
11 central service technicians, and (B) holds and maintains one of the
12 following credentials: (i) A certified registered central service
13 technician credential administered by the International Association of
14 Healthcare Central Service Materiel Management, (ii) a certified sterile

46 Distribution, Inc., not later than two years after such person's date of
47 hire or contracting for services with the healthcare facility.

48 (d) A central service technician shall complete a minimum of ten
49 hours of continuing education annually. The continuing education
50 shall be in areas related to the functions of a central service technician.

51 (e) A health care facility shall, upon the written request of a central
52 service technician, verify, in writing, the central service technician's
53 dates of employment or the contract period during which the central
54 service technician provided services to the health care facility.

55 (f) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the following persons from
56 performing the tasks or functions of a central service technician: (1) A
57 health care provider, (2) a student or intern performing the functions
58 of a central service technician under the direct supervision of a health
59 care provider as part of the student's or intern's training or internship,
60 or (3) a person who does not work in a central service department in a
61 health care facility and has been specially trained and determined
62 competent, based on standards set by a health care facility's infection
63 prevention or control committee, acting in consultation with a central
64 service technician certified in accordance with subdivision (1) of
65 subsection (a) of this section, to decontaminate or sterilize reusable
66 medical equipment, instruments or devices, in a manner that meets
67 applicable manufacturer's instructions and standards.

68 (g) A health care facility shall retain a list of persons determined
69 competent under subsection (f) of this section. Such list shall include
70 job titles for such persons. A person determined competent pursuant
71 to subsection (f) of this section shall annually complete a minimum of
72 ten hours of continuing education in areas related to infection control
73 and the decontamination and sterilization of reusable medical
74 equipment, instruments and devices."