

**Legislative Testimony
Public Health Committee**

Proposed H.B. No. 6275 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF
ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTITIONERS

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My name is David Fried, and I have been practicing dentistry since 1986. I am a retired veteran of the United States Air Force and Connecticut Army National Guard, and maintain a private dental practice in Wallingford. I am a past President of the Meriden Wallingford Cheshire Dental Society, and have participated in the Mission of Mercy for the last 7 years. I am also a Husky provider, and a clinical instructor at UCONN School of Dental Medicine. I thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you in opposition to Proposed H.B. No. 6275 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTITIONERS.

It seems that this is another attempt to bring a bad idea to fruition. The ADHP concept is a good idea in backwoods Maine or Alaska, where Dentists are few and far between. However, there is no need here in Connecticut, where there are Dentists within a couple of miles. Patients on Husky are seen promptly, by providers in close proximity to their homes. It has been shown that access to dental care is no longer an issue in our state because the Dentists in Connecticut have enrolled in the Husky program.

The cost of educating, certifying, monitoring and credentialing ADHP providers of this type has not yet been evaluated. Dentists make the procedures we perform look easy, but there is nothing simple or easy about it. There are no "simple" procedures for mid-level practitioners to perform, and the only way to perform simple procedures is to know how to handle situations when they become complicated. As a clinical instructor at UCONN, I have first-hand knowledge as to how difficult it is for the best students in the country to become adept at Dentistry. It is nothing that can be "legislated" in a two year program. Education takes time. In this era of difficult patient health situations, providers need more years of training, not less. We have seen this trend in both the pharmacy and physical therapy arenas, which have gone to doctorate levels of training.

I would like to remind the committee that in 2011 the Ct Department of Public Health conducted an extensive study of ADHP at a cost of \$8000, and the committee reported that there was no evidence that there would be an increase in access to care. There is no new data to study, and it seems a new study at this point would offer no new solutions to a non-existent problem.

There also seems to be this misconception that women who become ADHPs will have another career path to elevate their salaries. This is an affront to female Dentists, who studied hard and endured economic and social hardships in order to earn their doctorate degrees. At this time, UCONN Dental School is approximately 50% women in the graduating class. It has been that way since I was a student in 1986. There are no restrictions to women who wish to become Dentists, and many hygienists have continued their professional careers by attending dental schools.

I would like to thank the Committee for allowing me to submit this testimony.

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