

Legislative Testimony
Public Health Committee
H.B. 6275 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE
PRACTITIONERS
Wednesday, March 11, 2015
Albert A. Natelli Jr., DDS

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Dr. Al Natelli and I reside in Southington, Connecticut. For the record let me say that I am also a part time volunteer instructor of dentistry at the University Of Connecticut School Of Dental Medicine and an advisory member to the Lincoln College Dental Assisting program. I have been practicing dentistry in Southington for over twenty years. My volunteer service to the citizens of our state includes but is not limited to the following: Candidate to represent the 81st District 2014, Southington Town Councilor from 2009 to 2011, and past Chairman of the Greater Southington Chamber of Commerce. Also, I work closely with our social Services Department here in Southington in treating local community members, either pro-bono (Southington's Pain Free Dental Days) or by reduced fees or by accepting Medicaid. In addition I have been involved with GKAS (Give Kids a Smile) and a volunteer with CT-MOM. I am here to testify in disfavor of House Bill 6275 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTITIONERS; but please permit me to note that my testimony here reflects my individual opinion and not the opinion or position of any entity.

Yogi Berra once answered a question with the following response, "... this is déjà vu all over again." One could say this is true for H.B. 6275 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTITIONERS. As I have read the bill there is no substance to it, there is no direction, other than to amend the general statutes. What and how will the statutes be amended? Members of the Public Health Committee may recall seeing similar bills in the past:

- In 2009 (HB 5630) the bill was proposed in the Public Health Committee **failing to be called for a vote**.
- In 2010 (HB 5355) the bill was raised in the Human Services Committee, made it out of Committee and **went no further**.
- In 2011 (HB 5616) the bill was again raised in the Human Services Committee, again made it out of Committee, but again **failed to garner enough support** for it to be reviewed by the Committee that has cognizance over scope issues, Public Health.
- In 2012 (HB5541) the bill **failed to make it out of the Public Health Committee**.
- In 2013 (HB6589) the bill **died in the Public Health Committee**.

In 2011 the scope of practice for dental hygienists was thoroughly studied in 2011 at the request of the Public Health Committee. The process, overseen by the Program Review and Investigations Committee, was conducted by the Department of Public Health. *The Department submitted its findings to the Public Health Committee in February of 2012 in a detailed report. The report concluded that:*

"Although it seems conceivable that the creation and utilization of a mid-level oral health provider such as an ADHP has the potential to enhance access to quality and affordable health care in CT primarily through increased utilization, there was no documented current practice data provided to support this theory. Data provided by the Department of Social Services suggests that access is no longer an issue for the CT Medicaid population; utilization is the problem."

Because CT has more than 1,900 dental providers participating in HUSKY/Medicaid, ANY child in CT can get a routine appointment within 10 days and an emergency appointment within 24 hours. In addition, 100% of HUSKY/Medicaid patients are able to access care within 15 miles of their residence while 99% are able to access two or more dentists within 10 miles of their place of residence. And, the State will PAY FOR THEIR TRANSPORTATION! Three quarters of the dental care provided to Medicaid enrollees today is through private dental offices enrolled in HUSKY/Medicaid

Finally there will be significant costs to the State in the form of regulation and oversight. There is currently no regulatory state agency with oversight responsibilities focused on quality of care standards that might be associated with the Mid-Level Hygienist, such as the Dental Commission which regulates dentists. Thus, the State would need to develop and implement an entirely new process of examinations in order for ADHPs to demonstrate clinical competency and ensure patient safety. We all know we do not need to spend any more in this budget.

We have a small state. We are about 55 miles north to south and 90 miles east to west. We are not the size of other states with Advanced Dental Practicing Hygienists. Due to the lack of additional information to support the creation of a mid-level provider in Connecticut, I urge you to not support this bill. I would like to sincerely thank-you for your time.

Respectfully Submitted,

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