

**Legislative Testimony
Public Health Committee**

**HB No. 6275 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF
ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTITIONERS**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2015
N. Summer Lerch, DDS, FAGD**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Dr. N. Summer Lerch. I have been practicing dentistry in New Haven, CT for over 30 years. My volunteer service to the citizens of our state include Give Kids A Smile, CT Mission of Mercy, Smiling Souls and pro bono work in my office for women of limited means and survivors of domestic violence.

I am here to testify **AGAINST H.B. No. 6275 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTITIONERS.**

POINT 1: CT DOES NOT NEED ADHP. There is no niche of underserved for them to fill. Let me explain:

Several years ago the General Assembly did the hard work of passing legislation that ensured that all HUSKY/Medicaid enrolled citizens would be covered by dental providers with rates that were competitive to private dental insurance. That move by you and your colleagues transformed the landscape for our citizens. Dentist jumped onto the DSS website and enrolled as providers. Now with more than **1900 dentist** (up from about 400 - 8 years ago) ANY child in CT can get a routine appointment within 10 days and an emergency appointment within 24 hours.

Statistic 1: 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!

Statistic 2: 3/4 of dental care provided to Medicaid enrollees today is through private dental offices enrolled in HUSKY/Medicaid.

POINT 2: THERE WILL BE SIGNIFICANT COSTS FOR THE STATE. This will be in the form of regulation and oversight for the state:

There is currently **no regulatory state agency** with an oversight function focused on quality of care standards that might be associated with the Mid-Level Hygienist, such as the Dental Commission which regulates dentists. 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.

Statistic 3: Passing ADHP will cost the state money.

POINT 3: ADHP BILLS HAVE BEEN PROPOSED FOR YEARS AND NEVER ADVANCED. If we needed this bill it would have passed. Here is the history:

- 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.**

POINT 4: CT HYGIENISTS ALREADY HAVE A NICHE TO EXPAND INTO And that niche is not being filled:

We have a crisis in our nursing homes. There is no easy access to home bound, institution bound, or nursing home bound residents for dental care. Several years ago, the door was opened by the General Assembly, allowing dental hygienists to work independently in public and private long term care facilities. That niche has not been filled in by hygienists in our state, as only 5 dental hygienists practice independently in CT nursing homes. We should see gains in this area before moving into new territory.

Statistic 4: There is a state need the hygienist can fill without ADHP and they are not filling it.

I thank you for your time and attention. I urge you to vote down **HB No. 6275 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTITIONERS.** It truly is not needed in our state.

Respectfully Submitted,

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