



Testimony of Deborah Chernoff, Public Policy Director
District 1199, Service Employees International Union
Before the Public Health Committee

Supporting: HB 6814, AN ACT CONCERNING DENTAL ASSISTANTS AND EXPANDED FUNCTION DENTAL AUXILIARY

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill 6814, *AAC Dental Assistants and Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary*.

For the record, my name is Deborah Chernoff and I serve as Public Policy Director for the 25,000 health care workers of District 1199, Service Employees International Union. We are proud to count among our membership both dentists and dental assistants providing vital health care in a variety of public settings, including the Department of Correction and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

This legislation would allow dentists to delegate certain functions and duties to trained dental assistants, including taking dental x-rays and taking impressions of teeth for models and orthodontic devices. It would also limit other responsibilities, such as temporary restorations, long-term individual fillings and coronal polishing to dental assistants who have completed the training and are appropriately credentialed as Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary, commonly known as EFDA.

Public Safety and Care Accessibility Benefits of HB 6814

- Adding EFDAs to dental care providers in Connecticut would increase the capacity of state dentists to work more efficiently and at a lower cost in places in public service.
- Access to dental care is extremely limited to many people, especially children, on Medicaid or other publicly-funded programs. Quality and timely dental care is an essential component of good health. The addition of EFDAs to dental care providers can expand accessibility for both children and adults.
- Many studies have shown that EFDAs provide safe and quality patient care because they perform only reversible procedures (they can be either corrected or redone without undue harm to the patient's health) while working under the guidance and approval of a licensed dentist at all times.

Education and Career Advancement Benefits of HB 6814

- EFDA education programs in Connecticut will be provided by institutions accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) and would be available only to nationally certified dental assistants.
- The advantage of offering an EFDA program to dental assistants is that they already have an intimate knowledge of chairside procedures because they work alongside the dentist at all times.
- The availability of EFDA programs would give motivated individuals a chance to contribute more to dental care with advanced skill sets, and would increase job satisfaction, recruitment and retention.

EFDA: Successful in 40 States and over 40 Years of Practice

- As early as 1962, the United States Navy reported that the use of trained dental technicians performing expanded duties did so with a high level of quality while increasing production.
- The Division of Dental Health, Philadelphia Department of Public Health initiated a program in 1970 to train 4 dental assistants (referred to as techno therapists or expanded duty auxiliary), whose technical performances after their training was evaluated by The Temple University School of Dentistry department chairman and scored at a level with or above that of the dentists.
- In 1976, Ohio began the development, education and implementation of EFDAs. These programs are still in place today and are very successful.
- Since then, over 40 states have incorporated EFDAs into their dental practice acts and dental workforce.

In summary, HB 6814 proposes expanding dental practice in Connecticut in a way that is safe, effective, proven and important to increasing access to better dental care. On behalf of our 25,000 health care providers, I urge you to pass this important legislation.