

Support Testimony for Raised Bill No. 6814

"AN ACT CONCERNING DENTAL ASSISTANTS AND EXPANDED FUNCTION DENTAL AUXILIARY."

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and Members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is Gary Jacobs and I reside in Clinton. I am a dental assistant and dental hygienist with over 30 years of experience in the field as an educator and practitioner in private practice.

Although I am native to Connecticut, I lived in Florida for approximately 7 years prior to relocating back to Connecticut. During my residency in Florida, I had the opportunity to experience the benefits of Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary first hand. As early as 1994, this experience included teaching expanded duties to dental assisting and dental hygiene students at Edison Community College in Fort Myers, Florida. As legislation in other states, Bill 6814 is all inclusive: "Expanded function dental auxiliary means a credentialed dental assistant, dental hygienist licensed under chapter 379a, a person who has served as an expanded function dental auxiliary for a period of not less than three years in the United States armed forces or the United States Department of Health and Human Services' United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps or Indian Health Service, or a person holding a diploma from a foreign dental school."

Florida, as well as, over 43 other states that include our neighboring States and the District of Columbia have benefited from this proven efficient and accessible delivery of expanded function dental care.

Dental Assistants in Connecticut are underutilized members of the workforce that can make a significant difference fostering accessible dental care in a cost effective manner. As of November, 6, 2014 there were 650 Dental Assistants in Connecticut holding Dental Assisting National Board Certification that can become qualified for Expanded Functions with reasonable additional education and training. This could increase job opportunities and access to dental care in a very cost effective manner.

In addition, I support **Raised Bill No. 6814** as proposed by the Connecticut Dental Assistants Association for the following reasons:

- Connecticut Department of Labor statistics project the Dental Assisting profession as a field of demand with high growth at a rate of 8.4% with an estimated 122 annual employment opportunities.
- Dental Assistants in Connecticut are underutilized members of the workforce that can make a significant difference fostering accessible dental care in a cost effective manner. As of November 6, 2014 there were 650 Dental Assistants in Connecticut holding Dental Assisting National Board Certification that can become qualified for Expanded Functions with reasonable additional education and training. This could increase job opportunities and access to dental care in a very cost effective manner. This proposal is a win-win-win for all stakeholders.

- The implementation of EFDA's at places such as the Department of Health and Addictions which includes Connecticut Valley Hospital with over 600 patients; the Department of Children and Families; the Department of Corrections; the Department of the Mentally Disabled; and the UCONN School of Dental Medicine can improve capacity for public care by providing practitioners with more time to treat currently underserved populations to include the elderly, special needs, and Medicaid recipients.
- EFDA programs using dental assistants have been around for a long time in the United States. Some of the earliest programs include: The United States Navy (1962); The Public Health Service Division of Indian Health (1964); The Public Health Service, Division of Dental Health Louisville, KY (1964); The Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Division of Dental Health (1969); EFDA legislation passed in Ohio (1976). These programs continue to be successful.
- Since then, over 40 states have incorporated EFDA's into their dental practice acts and dental workforce.
- EFDA education programs in Connecticut will be provided by institutions that are accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) and would be available only to dental assistants who hold certification by the Dental Assisting National Board.
- EFDA's provide safe and quality patient care because they perform only reversible procedures while working under the supervision and approval of a licensed dentist at all times.
- This EFDA legislation is also supported by the Connecticut State Dental Association, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the Connecticut Society of Pediatric Dentists and the Connecticut Association of Endodontists.

I urge you to please support this bill and to **please keep it intact.**

Thank you for your consideration,

Gary L. Jacobs, CDA, RDH, B.S. Ed., MPA