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**Legislative Testimony  
Public Health Committee  
HB 5133 – An Act Concerning Dental Assistants  
Tuesday, February 16, 2016  
Carolyn J. Malon, D.D.S.**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Dr. Carolyn Malon. I am a Past President of the Connecticut State Dental Association, serve as Vice-Chair of the CSDA Council on Legislation, served six years on the CT State Dental Commission, and am a Husky provider. I am hereby submitting my testimony in favor of HB 5133 – An Act Concerning Dental Assistants.

There have not been updates to the statutes regarding dental assistants in many years, and so the provisions in HB 5133 make sense. As one who has served on the Connecticut State Dental Commission, I agree that the commissioners are most qualified to decide which competencies should be allowed for provision by dental assistants, as well as for dental hygienists. Having served on a task force regarding the Dental Practice Act, witnessed much legislative activity over the past few years, and read numerous raised bills, I firmly believe that those competencies should not be listed in statute, but the commissioners should be allowed the flexibility of reviewing such recommendations to allow for future changes without having to go through the legislative process.

Furthermore, I would recommend that HB 5133 be amended to add language to allow for the establishment of the EFDA model in Connecticut. I understand that provisions for Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries were intended to be included in this bill. This model has been debated by the Public Health Committee numerous times in recent years, and there has been no opposition to it. Indeed, Connecticut lags way behind the forty-four other states who have had EFDA's working in both public health and private office settings for years. My husband, who is also a general dentist, has been working in Vermont periodically over the last year and a half, helping out dentist friends who have had some medical setbacks. In Vermont, he has worked with an expanded function assistant. He has found this to be a very efficient way of providing care in an area where dental services are in high demand, due to the smaller number of dentists in that state.

The Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary model is one which gives both dental assistants and hygienists the opportunity to improve their skills and become more valuable members of the dental team. At the same time, EFDAs could help to improve efficiency in the delivery of dental care in FQHC's and in the many, many private dental offices where most Husky patients are currently being seen. For these and many other reasons, I support the addition of language to allow EFDA's as well.

Finally, I would strongly urge the members of the Public Health Committee to take up this bill, and the addition of EFDA language, as a stand alone issue. Over the past few years, there have been attempts to amend EFDA bills to add discussion of other workforce models. The result has been stagnation. The EFDA model has a proven record in forty-four states, and it time for Connecticut to join that group. HB 5133, a bill which addresses only dental assistants (and EFDA's) should be debated on its own merits, without additional workforce model additions which might create confusion.

Therefore, I urge you to adopt HB 5133 - An Act Concerning Dental Assistants as proposed.

Respectfully Submitted,

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