

“Oral health for all”



March 5, 2016

Connecticut General Assembly – Public Health Committee
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: HB 5537 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH STATUTES

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

I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative, an advocacy organization concerned with oral health care and coverage for all Connecticut residents. **I support the changes made to sections 10, 11, 12 and 13 in HB 5537, An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Public Health Statues.** Infection control in dentistry is absolutely critical to the safety and care of patients and should be a shared responsibility in practice.

Whether you're having a routine dental cleaning or a more complex treatment, proper infection control is vital. Pathogens can be transmitted from patient to patient, dental professional to the patient, and patient to the professional. Though dental practices operate under the law and regulations of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)¹, it only addresses the safety of the employees. It is **the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention that has created guidelines and recommendations for infection control for dentistry² to improve the safety for the patients.**

It is imperative that every licensed dental professional know and follow the recommendations to prevent the transmission of infections. **Updates and refreshers for dentists and dental hygienists every two years as would be require by this act ensures the safety of the public served in their practices.**

Incidentally, dental assistants, who are not certified or licensed by the state of Connecticut, are often charged with maintaining infection control in dental practices. **I support HB 5537 that requires dental assistants to undergo training for infection control.** Preparation for the Dental Assisting National Board, Infection Control Exam teaches a dental assistant how to recognize and restrict the spread of infection.

New technology, materials, data and equipment are introduced to dental practices regularly and dental assistants will not receive the benefit of up to date training under the

¹ See <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3187/osha3187.html>

² See <http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/guidelines/index.htm>

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revisions of this bill. I would recommend that dental assistants complete at least bi-annual CDC-based infection control training as monitored by the dental practice to refresh their knowledge on infection control and remain up to date on new developments in the guidelines. This training could be tracked in the same manner as is OSHA training detailed in OSHA Standards 1910.1030 Bloodborne pathogens which requires annual training and recording of the training as to persons in attendance, date and topics.³

I know you share my concern for the safety of our state’s residents in dental practices. **I urge you to support this very important measure that will ensure safe practices of infection control in dental practices in our state.** If I can be of any assistance, please contact me. Thank you for your time and your commitment to all Connecticut residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Moran Boudreau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Moran Boudreau
Executive Director, COHI
maryb@ctoralhealth.org

³ See <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh2254.pdf>