

Kenneth A Litwin MD, FACP
Danbury Medical Group, LLC
132 Main Street, Danbury CT 06810
Tel: 203-794-1979 Fax:203-794-1796

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Re: IN SUPPORT OF HB 5129 "An Act Concerning the Administration of Vaccines by Pharmacists and Medical Assistants and the Listing of Certified Medical Assistants"

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

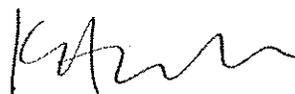
As a Primary Care physician working in a small group practice, it is becoming more and more difficult to practice efficiently. Please keep in mind that I work in a small business, and we employ many non-physicians, who all support their families, just like any other small business. As you may be aware, physicians are grappling with many new onerous regulations concerning documentation and use of electronic medical records from both the state and federal governments. Physicians and medical offices are also subject to an increasing amount of un- or under-reimbursed care as a result of insurer policies towards physicians as a means to remaining highly profitable corporations for their shareholders and executives. This has led to more and more of my time being spent on ridiculous administrative tasks and less and less of my time being spent face-to-face with patients. Even a slight reduction in the time that a physician needs to spend doing simple tasks that could otherwise be delegated to an appropriately trained staff member would be greatly appreciated.

Due to current state regulations, the medical assistants working in our office are unable to administer vaccinations to our patients. This is despite the fact that they receive training in vaccine administration routinely as part of their education. In all but one other state in our country, state law permits medical assistants to administer vaccines. Administering a vaccine is not a very complicated task. In fact, medical assistants routinely perform phlebotomy, which is much more difficult and prone to adverse effects. Any objections from nurses stating that only they are qualified to administer vaccines safely are simply unfounded. In fact, I would imagine that most APRNs practicing independently in the state of Connecticut would gladly delegate the task of vaccine administration to their medical assistants in order to more efficiently use their time. Physicians generally do not perform phlebotomy in their offices themselves and have delegated this mundane and time-consuming task to their medical assistants. We are asking for the same thinking be applied to the even less risky and simple task of vaccine administration.

Every second that we waste going to the refrigerator, drawing up the vaccine, documenting the lot number and expiration date, and actually administering the vaccine, is a second that we are not spending with our patients.

It is clear to me that certified medical assistants, working under the supervision of a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant should logically be able to administer vaccinations. Without this bill becoming law, I do fear that our small business will inch closer and closer to non-existence, just another small business "gobbled up" by the larger forces surrounding us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, 
Kenneth Litwin, MD, FACP