

Testimony to Public Health Committee – Jennifer Boyce, DMD

HB 7281 An Act Concerning the Practice of Dental Therapy by Licensed Dental Hygienists and HB 7303 An Act Concerning the Recommendations by the Department of Public Health Regarding Dental Practitioners

March 13, 2019

I am writing in full support of HB 7281 concerning the practice of dental therapy by licensed dental hygienists in Connecticut. In addition to my 25 years in private practice in Danbury, I have experience in public health settings. From 1990 to 1997, I was resident then attending at the general practice residency program at Danbury Hospital, where the patient pool ranged from hospital employees to in patients to the mentally and physically challenged to the prisoners from FCI. Currently, I serve as clinic dentist at the University of Bridgeport, Fones School of Dental Hygiene and provide restorative dental care at Tisdale Elementary School, Bridgeport, a clinic run through the hygiene school.

From my perspective, the need for improved access to dental care has remained unchanged from the early 1990s to the present. Our clinic at Fones School of Dental Hygiene serves patients every day that need care beyond the current scope of dental hygienists. At the Tisdale Elementary School in Bridgeport, we treat children from age 5 to 14 whose socioeconomic challenges put them at highest risk for incidence and recurrence of dental disease. In these settings, a dental hygienist with advanced training in dental therapy would serve the basic needs of these patients in settings they are already providing hygiene services. Our dental hygiene program at the University of Bridgeport provides a solid foundation of the clinical and didactics needed to properly educate the dental hygienist who wishes to take her/his training to the next level. Dental therapy would be a seamless extension of care that, under dentist supervision, would serve the underserved in a more cost effective way.

Submitted respectfully,

Jennifer Boyce, DMD

Adjunct Clinical Professor

Fones School of Dental Hygiene

University of Bridgeport.