

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 17-44

HB6979

House	1802-1806	5
Senate	2133-2135	3
Public Health	72-78, 88-92, 646-651	18
		26

Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public
Hearing(s) and/or Senate and House of Representatives
Proceedings

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2017**

**VOL.60
PART 5
1721 – 2170**

ph
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

133
April 19, 2017

Those Voting Yea	115
Those Voting Nay	29
Absent and Not Voting	5

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The Bill passes as amended. [Gavel] Will the Clerk please call Calendar 33.

CLERK:

On page 1, House Calendar 33, House Bill No. 6979, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ACCREDITATION OF DENTAL ASSISTANT PROGRAMS. Favorable report of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Health.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Steinberg, you have the floor, sir.

REP. STEINBERG (136TH):

Mr. Speaker, I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The question before the Chamber is on acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. Representative Steinberg.

ph
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

134
April 19, 2017

REP. STEINBERG (136TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill expands the list of qualifying education programs that dental assistants can avail themselves of. The Clerk has an amendment, LCO 6036. I ask the Clerk to please call the amendment and I be granted leave of the Chamber to summarize.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Will the Clerk please call LCO No. 6036.

CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule A, LCO No. 6036, offered by Representative Steinberg, Senator Gerratana, Representative Srinivasan.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize the amendment. Is there objection to summarization? Hearing none, please proceed.

REP. STEINBERG (136TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This simply adds the word "regional," so we have national or regional accreditation. I move adoption.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The question is on adoption. Will you remark on the amendment before us? Will you remark on the amendment before us? If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. The amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the good Chairman said, all that this Bill does in the amended Bill is adds the word "national" along with "regional." So, the accreditation here is complete and whether you are -- you get the credentials either from the regional or a national board, you can continue to do this practice. It's a good Bill, it ought to pass. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

Members to the Chamber. The House of Representatives is voting by roll, members to the Chamber.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Have all the members voted? Members please stay in the Chamber. We are doing one more Bill and then we're going to have guests arriving. Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally. The Clerk will announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill 6979, as amended by House A.

Total Number of Voting	141
Necessary for Passage	71
Those Voting Yea	141
Those Voting Nay	0
Absent and Not Voting	8

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Stokes, for what purpose do your

ph
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

137
April 19, 2017

rise, sir.

REP. STOKES (58TH):

Okay. I rise to be able to cast my vote in the last vote in the affirmative. I apologize for being out of the Chamber.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The Journal will so note.

REP. STOKES (58TH):

Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Altobello, for what purpose do you rise, sir?

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND):

Mr. Speaker, to be recorded in the affirmative, please.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The Journal will also note. The Bill, as amended, is passed. [Gavel] Will the Clerk please call Calendar 213.

CLERK:

On page 22, Calendar 213, Substitute House Bill No. 6237, AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF MEANS TO

S - 707

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2017**

**VOL .60
PART 6
1990 - 2383**

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Senate

144
May 31, 2017

Thank you, Madam President. We have some items for our consent calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar Page 21, Calendar 378, H.B. 6979, I'd like to mark that item for the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar Page 32, Calendar 450, H.B. 7196, I'd like to mark that item for the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

I'm seeing no objections to the order, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On Calendar Page 20, Calendar 368, H.B. 7173, I'd like to mark that item for our consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

I'm seeing no objections to the order, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

tm
Senate

145
May 31, 2017

And, thank you, Madam President. For our last item on Calendar Page 39, Calendar 495, H.B. 7245, I'd like to mark that item to our consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

I'm seeing no objections. So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. The clerk can now call for a vote on the consent calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

You'll have to just give us a minute and we'll do that in a second. Mr. Clerk, will you please call, do you have the bills that are on the consent calendar? Would you repeat that, please? Would you tell what bills they are, sir?

CLERK:

Page 17, Calender 355, S.B. 941; on Page 21, Calendar 378, H.B. 6979; Page 32, Calendar 450, 7196 H.B.; Page 20, Calendar 368, H.B. 7173; and on Page 39, Calendar 495, H.B. 7245.

THE CHAIR:

At this time, Mr. Clerk, will you call for roll call vote on the second consent calendar? The machine will be open.

CLERK:

tm
Senate

146
May 31, 2017

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the second consent calendar for today. Immediate roll call in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

All members have voted. All members have voted. The machine will be closed. Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally?

CLERK:

On the 2nd consent calendar for today,

Total number voting	35
Those voting Aye	35
Those voting Nay	0
Absent, not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

The consent calendar has been adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. That concludes our business for today. I will yield to any announcements or points of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Any points of personal privilege or announcements? Seeing none. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PUBLIC
HEALTH
PART 1
1 – 515**

**2017
INDEX**

PUBLIC HEARING

connect with the -- with the person around connecting to ongoing services.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31ST): Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you, Madam Chair for allowing me to go the second time.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): Thank you, Representative. Are there any other questions? If not, thank you so much for coming and testifying today, Commissioner. We appreciate it.

MIRIAM DELPHIN-RITTMAN: Oh, you're welcome.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): Okay. At this point, we will be going to public participation. We're well beyond the first hour of testimony in this committee by officials and agency members. So next will be Cynthia Strycharz and then followed -- following her will be Representative Carney. Good morning.

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: Good morning --

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): Good morning.

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: -- Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg and members of the Public Health Committee. Thank you. I know it's a long morning for you already. So I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Cynthia Strycharz. I am the dental assistant of the curriculum chair at Porter and Chester.

I have worked as a certified dental assistant for over 40 years now and in the past 11 years, I have worked for Porter and Chester Institute, teaching the dental assistant program. I'm here to testify in support of the bill 6979, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ACCREDITATION OF THE DENTAL ASSISTING PROGRAMS. Porter and Chester to -- to talk a little bit about

PUBLIC HEARING

our school -- Porter and Chester is an occupational training school based in both -- based in Connecticut with campuses -- nine campuses over Connecticut en masse.

We are celebrating our 70 years -- 70 years at being in -- in education. We have served over 1500 dental assistant students over the past five years. So we are a thriving, outstanding dental assisting program that consists of 936 hours of which 300 is in externships. In our testimony letter, we outlined our curriculum and noted some of our competencies but I'd like to especially point out two that are students do and one is infection control in radiology where they take the Dental Assistant National Board exam which I'm proud to say for radiology, they have successfully passed at a rate of 92 percent. I'm sure that you'll agree that graduates from this program are highly trained dental assistants.

That brings us to our purposes here today as we ask that the language in our bill be tweaked a little bit. The changes proposed in line nine through 11 of 6979 with one further addition of inserting *national* or before the word *regional* in line 10. This would make it read, "successfully completed" -- this is of a -- a definition of what is a dental assistant -- "has successfully completed a dental assisting education program that is accredited or recognized by the New England Associations of School and Colleges any national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Ed."

And the second point of this, we'd like to also have the same language being referred to when we're

PUBLIC HEARING

talking about the bill as far as expanded functions of dental assisting program: "to qualify for that expanded function dental assisting program in an institute of higher education that is credited by the Commissioner in Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association" or we'd like to add, "or a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education".

These changes will ensure that students have earned their education. Schools through their accreditation will still pursue their goal of employment as a dental assistant or expanded function dental assistant. This will also not limit employees from hiring those formerly trained. Again, I thank you for the opportunity to come before the committee and present this testimony. We especially want to thank the committee as a whole for all the work they have done.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): Thank you. Thank you, Cynthia, for coming today and giving your testimony. [clearing throat] The bill as it reads now is regarding dental assistants but you want to do something with the EFDA?

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: There's two -- two parts that we have -- in that same bill, the first part just talks about what the -- a definition of it but it would eliminate us and of course, we're dental assistants. So if you add *national* and at -- definition of the accreditation then that would solve that problem.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): Did you discuss this -- both these changes with the Connecticut State Dental Association?

PUBLIC HEARING

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: Yes.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): And they were okay with both changes?

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: Yes.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): Okay. Thank you. Are there any other questions? Representative Petit.

REP. PETIT (22ND): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for your testimony. New territory for me but is there a reason why we wouldn't want to use the Commission on Dental Accreditation for the accreditation -- is there an advantage to changing, you know, or adding an accrediting body?

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: The EFDA program is -- is new for Connecticut. Expanded function -- so what they're asking is that the students, after they completed their dental assisting program, they go on for an additional education. Right now there's no -- there's -- there's no rules about how long that education should be. There's no guidelines on it. It's just saying that they have to go to a school that is CODA accredited.

We're -- what we're saying is there are many schools out there. If you look at what we proposed -- what our students have competencies of -- what we're teaching them now -- are things like in sealants or coronal polishing or impression taking. We do that now at our schools and like in the State of Mass, a Certified Dental Assistant can do those duties and so that's all we're saying.

Like sure, you know, there's nothing wrong with a CODA accredited school but there are plenty of schools that are highly qualified and highly trained

PUBLIC HEARING

and -- and we're asking that the -- in -- in order to become this, they have to take a national exam just like they do for radiology and infection control. So we're asking that to be the standard.

So as long as they get their education but they still have to take that national exam and then they still -- when they're doing these -- these -- these procedures, your -- your bill which rightly so, has -- has said this is what's under direct and this is what's indirect supervision from the dentist. So the dentist has to be there so it's not like they're -- now they can go off on their own and have their own patients.

So the dentist is overseeing all these procedures so they pass the national board, they've gotten the education, they've taken a national board, they said, okay, you passed it, and now you're gonna go find employment and even during the employment the dentist is still overseeing you. That's what we're asking for, is to allow other schools besides just CODA accredited schools to -- to be able to teach this education.

REP. PETIT (22ND): And a follow-up, if -- if I may, would it also be reasonable to let this go for another year or two cause as I understand, the extended function dental assistant's program is relatively new and we --

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: Brand new.

REP. PETIT (22ND): -- actually haven't had people through this system and in position yet so we haven't really started to doing what the original bill --

PUBLIC HEARING

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: Yes. Yes and I would gladly come back and speak to about it.

REP. PETIT (22ND): Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31ST): Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon. Thank you for being here this afternoon.

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: Thank you.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31ST): So if I'm reading what you -- what you've submitted to us -- we are looking for -- in House Bill 6979, the first one, you're looking for one more -- the United States Department of Education -- another agency -- if they have gotten the accreditation from them then it becomes automatic that they -- they have the -- the licenses to be -- to -- to practice dental assistants. Is that what the ask is?

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: It's just the titles. It's just the definition. Like now you're a dental assistant. Yes. I mean, they still have to pass schooling, they still have to be hired, you know, but the -- the first thing that we're asking for is just that our accreditation is a national accreditation and it's recognized.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31ST): So it won't have a -- a national accreditation and then they go through all the -- obviously they'll -- to get that they would have to pass all the exams and do all that's necessary --

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: Yes.

PUBLIC HEARING

REP. SRINIVASAN (31ST): So what you're looking for -- if I'm -- if I'm clear in my mind, is a kind of reciprocity if they have got this, they would be able to continue and don't have to get something special in Connecticut alone?

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: I'm -- I'm not quite understanding. So the first part of the bill -- just defines what a dental assistant is and it says you can be on-the-job-trained or you can be educated by these different agencies.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31ST): Right.

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: Those -- we're at -- right now it just says *regional*. We're asking it says *national and regional* so that our students that have gone through our schools and schools that are like us, are also considered dental assistants. And of course they are, they've gone through a schooling of 936 hours and they've been trained and -- and they've been hired and -- and so of course they're dental assistants but that language is not quite in there.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31ST): Thank you. You made that clear. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): You're welcome. Any other questions? If not, thank you so much for coming today and giving your testimony.

CYNTHIA STRYCHARZ: Thank you.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): Next is Representative Carney followed by Gary Jacobs.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Good afternoon, Chairman Gerratana, Chairman Somers, Chairman Steinberg, and ranking member Representative Srinivasan. I did

HB 5660
HB 5667

PUBLIC HEARING

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much Senator.

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): We appreciate it. Next is Gary Jacobs followed by Representative McCarthy Vahey.

GARY JACOBS: May I begin?

SENATOR GERRATANA (6TH): Yes, please do.

GARY JACOBS: Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Gary Jacobs. I am currently president-elect of the Connecticut Dental Assisting Association and a legislative liaison. I am also a full tenured professor at Tunxis Community College in the Allied Dental Program, Dental Hygiene, Dental Assisting with over 40 years experience in either education or administration of dental hygiene and dental assistant programs.

I'm here to speak on behalf of House Bill 6979, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ACCREDITATION OF DENTAL ASSISTANT PROGRAMS. The first part of that bill the Dental Assisting Association originally did agree upon, that the change from New England Association of College -- Schools and College to any regional Accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education because this would ensure across the borders from our neighboring states that don't participate in basics qualification with dental assisting and basic dental assisting definition.

However, I listened to my colleague from Porter and Chester who read her testimony earlier and it stated that we are, as a professional association, were on board with this, however, we are not on board with this. It indicated that they had been in

PUBLIC HEARING

discussions over the summer -- since the summer on the second part of this proposal -- legislation change and I just learned about it last night at 6:00 when I came home from -- came in from snow plowing the driveway.

So, we -- we did not know anything about it. We did not -- I still not have seen the language and -- to date, and we do not agree with this language change whatsoever. And I have written testimony. CODA is the only accrediting agency with standards for higher level expanded function dental assistant skills to provide adequate education training EFDA and safeguards community.

Institutional accreditation has little or no standards, accountability for dental education programs. At Tunxis Community College, the college as an institution is accredited by NEASC, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, however, the Dental Hygiene and Dental Assistant programs are each separately accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation or CODA. The University of Connecticut, as an institution is accredited but the school of Dental Medicine is also accredited by CODA.

Instead of lowering the bar, intent, and integrity of the original legislation in TA 1666 for particular institutions, we welcome these institutions to become CODA accredited and there is no reason why they can't go through and be held to the same standards. Porter and Chester is -- at one time was accredited by CODA and for some reason it has been relinquished.

In fact, the original bill includes language that EFDA programs have to meet CODA standards if a -- I

PUBLIC HEARING

just have one more sentence. Thank you so much. If a CODA institution is -- if a non-CODA institution is allowed to offer an EFDA education program, there would be no accountability for the content and instruction oversight.

Legislators may or may not be aware that current DA programs in Connecticut that are not CODA accredited do not prepare their students to qualify for the general chairside portion of the dental assistant national board to become certified dental assistants.

Yet they're paying thousands to tens of thousands of dollars in tuition, they still have to continue as on-the-job trained dental assistants once they complete the program, to obtain 3500 hours, which is two or more years of full-time on-the-job training to qualify to sit and take the chairside component of the dental assistant national board to become a certified dental assistant. I implore you not to support such language to ensure safe, successful EFDA programs and safeguard the public. Thank you for your time.

REP. STEINBERG (136TH): Thank you, Mr. Jacobs. Are any -- are there any questions for Mr. Jacobs? Yes, Representative Cook.

REP. COOK (65TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your testimony and for coming out today. I know you got into it a little bit but in layman's terms, can you please explain to us the difference between the accreditation of CODA that you're talking about and the one that does not exist? Like, what's the difference?

PUBLIC HEARING

GARY JACOBS: The -- CODA is program by the American Dental Association that -- dental hygiene, dental programs and most dental assistant programs are accredited by. It is specifically for dental programs. It doesn't -- it doesn't have anything to do with the -- the accreditation of the institution overall.

It has to do with accreditation and following the standards for a dental program, a dental tech program, a dental assistant program, a dental hygiene program. There is a specific application process and every seven years they have to go to through a review of very stringent curriculum standards where it maps out the time and -- and even the portion of their standards for EFDA and -- which is part of our original bill, which originally it was intended to be put in there. Each task a dental assistant or EFDA will have to do -- have to be taught to a lab -- first -- fluent electric didactics, the lab competencies, then clinical competencies for every single task that they're going to be allowed to do.

And they -- and mind you, too, we have also been on the committee working with the public health department on the rules and regulations portion of this which is to come over the last few months and these EFDA trained dental assistants are gonna be allowed to place filling material. So it is advanced procedures and it is an advanced program and even though it was said that it is new to Connecticut, I know many members, you know, have been with me because this has been a 14 year process to get the original bill passed and what CODA is -- pretty much the gold standard to ensure that you know, these tasks are taught to a particular level.

PUBLIC HEARING

REP. COOK (65TH): So you're saying, by passing this legislation we are not raising the bar, we are lowering the bar?

GARY JACOBS: Yes.

REP. COOK (65TH): Thank you.

GARY JACOBS: Absolutely.

REP. STEINBERG (136TH): Other questions? Mr. Jacobs, just one for you. I'm sure you understand the intent of the bill as proposed. It's been brought up perhaps this would aid access in certain parts of the state. What's your response to that?

GARY JACOBS: Aid access to?

REP. STEINBERG (136TH): To dental services in some parts of the state.

GARY JACOBS: Well, the original bill, yes. Yeah, the SOA - 00:00:33 was in *Public Act 1666*. That was the intent. Increased access to care. As -- as it is currently -- verbiage that's currently in the bill. It was passed last year.

REP. STEINBERG (136TH): So you don't see the proposed language in this bill as furthering that -- that objective?

GARY JACOBS: No, I do not.

REP. STEINBERG (136TH): Thank you. If there are no other questions, thank -- thank you, Mr. Jacobs. Next up, Representative McCarthy Vahey followed by Ellie Nicol.

GARY JACOBS: Thank you.

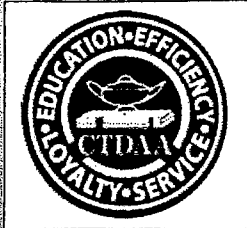
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Good afternoon, Chairman Steinberg, Chairwoman Somers, ranking

HB5384

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PUBLIC
HEALTH
PART 2
516 - 1099**

2017



CONNECTICUT DENTAL ASSISTANTS ASSOCIATION

"Setting a New Professional Standard"

Established 1941

Support Testimony to the Public Health Committee for Raised H.B. 6979 "An Act Concerning the Accreditation of Dental Assisting Programs"

Public Health Committee

Friday, February 10, 2017

Gary L. Jacobs, C.D.A., R.D.H., B.S., Ed., M.P.A.

Dear Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg, and Members of the Public Health Committee,

On behalf of the Connecticut Dental Assistants Association (CTDAA) I affirm support for raised Bill No. 6979 to amend Public Act No. 16-66 as stated:

3) "Dental assistant" means a person who: (A) Has (i) completed on-the-job training in dental assisting under direct supervision, (ii) successfully completed a dental assistant education program accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation, or (iii) successfully completed a dental assistant education program that is accredited or recognized by [the New England Association of Schools and Colleges] any regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education; and (B) meets any requirements established by the Commissioner of Public Health in regulations adopted pursuant to subsection (f) of this section; and

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	20-112a(a)(3)
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This amendment provides an inclusive approach for dental assistants that may have obtained training in other states within programs under United States Department of Education regional accrediting agencies. Thereby, providing mobility for dental assistants from boarder States.

However, the remainder of House Bill No. 5537, Public Act No. 16-66 sections pertaining to an Expanded Functions Dental Assistant definition, qualifications, functions, and program qualifications must remain intact. This includes the fact that an Expanded Functions Dental Assistant educational program must be offered at an institution accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). CODA is the only accrediting agency with standards for higher level expanded function dental assisting (EFDA) skills to provide adequately educated/trained EFDAs and safeguard the community.

The Connecticut Dental Assistants Association

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary L. Jacobs, C.D.A., R.D.H., B.S., Ed., M.P.A.
CTDAA President Elect



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Legislative Testimony
Public Health Committee
HB 6979 An Act Concerning the Accreditation of Dental Assistant Programs
Friday, February 10, 2017

Dear Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg and Members of the Public Health Committee,

On behalf of the Connecticut State Dental Association (CSDA), I write to support raised House Bill 6979 as currently written:

(3) "Dental assistant" means a person who: (A) Has (i) completed on-the-job training in dental assisting under direct supervision, (ii) successfully completed a dental assistant education program accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation, or (iii) successfully completed a dental assistant education program that is accredited or recognized by [the New England Association of Schools and Colleges] any regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education; and (B) meets any requirements established by the Commissioner of Public Health in regulations adopted pursuant to subsection (f) of this section; and...

The CSDA was happy to work with the Dental Assistants Association and Porter and Chester Institute to reach an agreement on being more inclusive regarding the recognized accrediting bodies for institutions providing dental assistant educational programs.

However, there is a distinct difference in the content and extent of clinical training between education programs for certified dental assistants, and those for Expanded Function Dental Assistants.

For this reason, I am compelled to clarify that the CSDA *is not in favor* of broadening the accreditation authority in Section (4) for **Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA)** programs to include organizations other than the Commission on Dental Accreditation, or CODA.

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) works to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards in the nation's dental schools and dental programs. CODA utilizes a collaborative, peer reviewed accreditation process to evaluate the quality of the nation's dental, and allied dental programs.

While institutions of post-secondary education that offer EFDA training programs must be accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, it is essential that the EFDA training program itself be accredited specifically by CODA, in order to ensure that the educational curriculum includes necessary didactic and laboratory/preclinical objectives for the expanded dental assisting skills and functions. It is impossible to ensure that the education and training for an EFDA program will provide the quality and quantity of education essential for safe and effective patient care unless it is accredited by CODA.

To be clear, while we can support expansion of accreditation authority for certified dental assisting programs, the CSDA cannot support allowing Expanded Function Dental Assistant educational programs to be accredited by any authority other than the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).

We would be happy to provide additional information or further clarification on these issues and would look forward to discussing the matter further.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Dingeldey
Executive Director



Testimony of Cynthia Strycharz
Dental Assisting Curriculum Chair
Porter and Chester Institute
Public Health Committee

HB 6979 An Act Concerning the Accreditation of Dental Assistant Programs
Friday, February 10, 2017

Good Morning Co-Chairs; Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg and members of the public health committee, thank you.

Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Cynthia Strycharz, I am the Dental Assisting Curriculum Chair at Porter and Chester Institute. I have worked as a Certified Dental Assistant for 40 years. For the past 11 years, I have worked for Porter and Chester Institute teaching the dental assisting program. I am here to testify in support of HB 6979 An Act Concerning the Accreditation of Dental Assistant Programs.

Porter and Chester is an occupational training school based in Connecticut for over 70 years with locations in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Our Connecticut campuses in Branford, Enfield, Rocky Hill, Stratford, and Waterbury have served approximately 1,000 Dental Assisting students over the past 5 years, and our Massachusetts campuses in Canton, Chicopee, Woburn, and Worcester and MA have served approximately 500 Dental Assisting students during the same time frame.

Last year in HB 5337 Public Act 16-66 the legislature addressed the training of dental assistants in a significant way. As the final process unfolded it became apparent that there were unintended consequences for many students and former students of the dental assisting program at Porter and Chester Institute and other schools, including students educated at out-of-state schools.

Upon realizing these concerns, we began discussions last summer with the interested parties including the public health committee as well as the Department of Public Health staff and the dental assistants' association and the dental society. We want to thank everyone for working so closely with us to address the needed changes contained in the bill before you today.

We urge the committee to support House Bill 6979 which addresses changes to Public Act 16-66 Section 38. The changes proposed in lines 9-11 of HB 6979 with one further addition inserting "national or" before the word regional in line 10. Section (A) (iii) would read:

"successfully completed a dental assistant education program that is accredited or recognized by [the New England Association of Schools and Colleges] any national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education;

Additionally, we have a similar comment on the same Section 38. of Public Act 16-66. We urge the committee to include the similar language changes in section (a) (4) of that public act into HB 6979. I have attached the additional change to this testimony.

These changes will ensure that students that have earned their education at schools with this accreditation can still pursue their goal of employment as a dental assistant or an expanded function dental assistant. This will also not limit employers from hiring these formally trained employees.

I want to take a moment to explain what's included in the curriculum and education a student in dental assisting receives at Porter & Chester. This program is a total of 45 quarter credit hours, comprising 936 hours of classroom instruction which includes 300 hours of externship. Students study Radiology, Infection Control, Chairside Assisting both General and Specialties, Medical Emergencies including CPR, Oral Health and Nutrition, Dental Sciences, Dental Materials, Charting and Office Management with a focus on digital record keeping.

Our students study for and take the Dental Assisting National Board exam for both Radiology and Infection Control.

Some of the lab and competencies that the students must pass include but are not limited to:

- a. Assist with and/or apply fluoride agents
- b. Assist with and/or place and remove rubber dam
- c. Assist with and/or apply bases, liners and bonding agents
- d. Assist with and/or place and remove matrix retainers, matrix bands and wedges
- e. Assist with and or taking preliminary impressions
- f. Assist with and/or placement of sealants
- g. Fabrication of custom trays, bleaching trays, bite rims and provisional restorations
- h. Taking full mouth x ray series both digital and analog
- i. Mounting of a full mouth analog series
- j. Assisting with and/or removal of sutures
- k. Assisting with and/or placement of retraction cord
- l. Handwashing, PPE,
- m. Instrument transfer and care
- n. Sterilization

Again, thank you for the opportunity to come before the committee and present our testimony. We specifically want to thank Senator Gerratana for her time in working with us on this legislation.

I am happy to answer any questions or get back to you with answers.

Thank you.

Proposed additional changes to PA 16-66 Section 38. – changes in italics and underlined

PA 16-66 section 38.

(a)

(4) "Expanded function dental assistant" means a dental assistant who has passed the Dental Assisting National Board's certified dental assistant or certified orthodontic assistant examination and then successfully completed: (A) An expanded function dental assistant program at an institution of higher education that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association or a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education that includes (i) educational courses relating to didactic and laboratory preclinical objectives for skills used by an expanded function dental assistant and that requires demonstration of such skills prior to advancing to clinical practice, (ii) not less than four hours of education in the area of ethics and professional standards for dental professionals, and (iii) a comprehensive clinical examination administered by the institution of higher education at the conclusion of such program; and (B) a comprehensive written examination concerning certified preventive functions and certified restorative functions administered by the Dental Assisting National Board.