



Connecticut State Dental Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CT STATE DENTAL ASSOCIATION AND SPEAKER DONOVAN SPEAK OUT IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION THAT INCREASES ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE

Support Dental Provisions of SustiNet Bill as Part of Dental Day at the Capitol

HARTFORD – Members of the [Connecticut State Dental Association](http://www.CSDA.com) (CSDA) were joined by Speaker of the House Christopher Donovan in speaking out in favor of the SustiNet bill’s dental provisions today as they unveiled the Association’s 2011 legislative agenda at a press conference held on Dental Day at the State Capitol. Dentists from around the state met with their senators and representatives to advocate for legislation that improves and increases access to quality, affordable dental care for all Connecticut citizens.

“The CSDA has long been the state’s trusted voice in speaking out for increased access to oral health care at the state legislature,” said Dr. Tatiana Barton, CSDA President Elect. “We are pleased to be joined today by Speaker Donovan in support of several bills which achieve this laudable goal. Specifically, we thank the House and Senate leadership for including dental care in the SustiNet legislation because we believe it will result in cost-effective care, the promotion of optimal health and will measurably increase health care access to the citizens of Connecticut. We are equally grateful for the legislative supporters of all our oral healthcare initiatives.”

House Speaker Christopher G. Donovan (D- Meriden) said, “Improving access to preventive services is a primary goal of the SustiNet legislation. We need to improve affordable access to dental and comprehensive health services regardless of prior histories. I am delighted with the CSDA’s support today, as they have been at the forefront of efforts to increase access to dental care for Connecticut residents.”

As part of its ongoing mission to increase access to care, the CSDA has been involved in numerous collaborative and educational initiatives around the state. For example as part of its involvement in the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership within the past 2 years, the number of providers participating has increased to more than 1,200 and has resulted in a 60% increase in the number of children receiving dental care. Today, any child that is enrolled in the Connecticut

Dental Health Partnership can receive a routine dental visit within the same amount of time as a child with a private plan. Similarly, the CSDA's participation in the Connecticut Mission of Mercy has provided over \$2 million in free dental care to more than 4,000 Connecticut residents who otherwise would not have had access to it. Connecticut Dental Day is another effort to collaborate with legislators to find cost-effective solutions to meet the dental needs of Connecticut's citizens.

"We are here today to meet with legislators and ask their support of legislation that will directly impact people's lives by affording them greater opportunities to enter the oral health care system," said Dr. Jonathan Knapp, co-chair of the CSDA Council on Legislation. "Our 2011 legislative agenda is an expression of that mission. Extending coverage to children up to age 26 is one way of ensuring that access to oral healthcare is maintained. We are also mindful of the state's historic budget constraints and thus, our proposals seek to increase access while saving precious taxpayer dollars. Maintaining adult dental Medicaid funding, for example, allows individuals who would otherwise lose coverage to continue to have access to regular visits without straining the state's wallet. We are grateful that the Governor maintained some funding for the program in his budget. We look forward to working with the Governor's Office and the General Assembly's leadership and members to achieve passage of these important pieces of legislation."

About Connecticut State Dental Association

The Connecticut State Dental Association (CSDA) has approximately 2,670 members including dentists, dental hygienists and dental assistants. As the trusted leader and voice for oral health care in CT, the CSDA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1864. For more information about the CSDA, visit the Association's Web site at www.csda.com.

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