CONNECTICUT CHAPTER
OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC

Statement of the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Surgeons
Professional Association, Inc. (“CTACSPA”) to the Connecticut Joint Finance, Revenue and Bonding
Committee on SB 1007 An Act Concerning The Governor’s Recommendations on Revenue
Taxation on Cosmetic Surgical Procedures

March 7, 2011

The American College of Surgeons, a professional association of 78,000 members with over 1,080 in Connecticut, and
the CTACSPA is opposed to the imposition of taxes on cosmetic surgical procedures. Senate Bill 1007 contains a
provision to assess a tax for cosmetic procedures defined as being “elective.” We are opposed to this provision and urge
you not to implement this inappropriate tax on surgical procedures.

Surgeons and other physicians should not be turned into tax collectors for the state of Connecticut. Doing so is unwise
health care policy, regardless of whether or not a procedure may be considered elective. In fact, determining which
procedures are cosmetic or medically necessary can be quite difficult and should not be left up to the legislature or state
tax auditors. What may be a cosmetic procedure in one case may be medically necessary in another – and untrained,
non-medical professionals should not be making that judgment call. We also strongly believe that non-medical
professionals should not have access to confidential patient medical records.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, cosmetic surgery is not an exclusive luxury afforded by the wealthy. In fact,
cosmetic surgery patients are most likely to be working middle class women. If the Connecticut legislature is
concerned about raising revenue to address state budget shortfalls, it should not do so with a tax on health care services
that disproportionally targets working women but should instead consider taxes on true luxury consumer items.

It is important to note that a tax on cosmetic surgery can be costly to collect and will not generate the level of revenue
desired. For example, New Jersey is the only state to have implemented a cosmetic surgery tax, and legislators grossly
overestimated potential revenue and underestimated the administrative burden to collect it. Since 2004, the New
Jersey Department of Taxation has experienced a 59% shortfall based on projected revenue estimates. In fact, according
to independent studies, for every $1 the state collects on the tax, it loses $3.39 in total revenue. As a result, New Jersey
Assemblyman Joseph Cryan, the sponsor of the 2004 bill, is leading efforts to repeal the tax in his state and has
communicated this experience to elected officials all over the country.

We urge you to consider other options for addressing Connecticut’s budget shortfalls. We believe that a cosmetic
procedures tax is not the solution.

Uniting Surgeons To Advance Patient Care In Connecticut