

March 26, 2007

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing  
Bill #1448

Good afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Brittmarie Harwe from Wethersfield. I am testifying in support of Bill #1448. I would like to advise the committee that I have a paralyzed vocal cord so please bear with me.

In 1993, when I was just 26 years old, I had a stroke immediately following a chiropractic cervical adjustment. I was taken by ambulance to the hospital and tests revealed that one of my vertebral arteries was crushed during the chiropractic adjustment. I was left with neurological disabilities including left side paralysis, paralyzed vocal cord and the loss of the ability to swallow. Since I couldn't swallow, a feeding tube was inserted. For the past 14 years now, I have only been able to eat through the tube in my stomach. This stroke has forever changed my life and the lives of my family.

Since such severe injury is a possibility with chiropractic adjustments, malpractice and other pertinent information about chiropractors should be made public. Before going to any healthcare provider, my mother always told me to check out information available about a doctor's education and background. I tried to before going to this particular chiropractor, and I was unable to find out anything about him. In fact, even now, the only information that the Department of Public Health's website provides about a chiropractor is his license status and if there was any disciplinary action taken. In the State of Connecticut malpractices claims as well as felony sexual abuse convictions are not made public for other healthcare providers like they are for medical and homeopathic physicians.

After my stroke happened, my attorney disclosed to me that my chiropractor had not only hurt me but had a previous large malpractice settlement. A large settlement usually involves sever injury or death. Had this information been available, it would have raised a red flag and I might not have gone to him for treatment or at the very least, I would have discussed my concerns with him so that maybe he would have been more careful with me.

Bill #1448 would give the public important information like education and post graduate training, malpractice, disciplinary actions and felony convictions for not only chiropractors but for 8 other groups of healthcare providers. For example, the State of Florida has provided their residents with the same Practitioner Profile since 1997, which Bill #1448 would provide to the citizens of the State of Connecticut. I strongly feel the residents of Connecticut deserve the same benefits that other states already provide. Again, my name is Brittmarie Harwe and I represent the Chiropractic Stroke Victims Awareness Group which consists of hundreds of young people, most between the ages of 25 and 48, who unfortunately cannot be here today due either their sever disabilities or gag order they were forced to sign..

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my concerns and I hope you will support Bill #1448.