

Good afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Brittmarie Harwe from Wethersfield and I am the co-founder of the Chiropractic Stroke Awareness Group which consists of hundreds of young people, most between the ages of 25 and 48 who have been injured by chiropractic adjustments. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill # 483 (An Act Promoting Patient Safety and Access to Provider Information by Extending the State Physician Profile to Certain Other Health Care Providers).

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1993, I was just 26 years old and it was the day before my daughter turned 2. I went to a chiropractor because of a sore shoulder and neck. I had a stroke immediately following a chiropractic cervical adjustment. The chiropractor called 911 and reported his patient was having a "reaction". He didn't mention he had just performed a neck adjustment. Nor did he mention that I immediately became so dizzy, I was unable to sit or stand without his assistance, I couldn't speak and I wasn't able focus my eyes. 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 many neurological disabilities including left side weakness, paralyzed vocal cord and worst of all; I lost of the ability to swallow. Since I couldn't swallow without aspirating, a feeding tube was surgically placed in my stomach. For the past 14 years I have not been able to eat anything except the liquid nutrition that is pored directly through my tube. This stroke has forever changed my life and the lives of my family.

Later I learned, from my attorney, this chiropractor had not only hurt me but had a previous large malpractice settlement. A large settlement usually involves severe 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. Chiropractic treatment is advertised as safe and natural – no risk is mentioned.

As a matter of fact, I had asked the chiropractor before beginning treatment if there were any risks with neck manipulation. I will never forget his response – "Some people have reactions". The next time I heard the word "reaction" was when he called 911. He called it a "reaction", but I almost died. Since such severe injury is a possibility with chiropractic adjustments, malpractice and other pertinent information about chiropractors should be made public.

Bill #483 would give the public important information like education and post graduate training, malpractice settlements or judgments, disciplinary actions and felony convictions for not only chiropractors but for the other healthcare providers included. The State of Florida has provided their residents with a similar system called the Practitioner Profile since 1997. I strongly feel the residents of Connecticut deserve the same benefits that other states already provide their citizens.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my concerns and I hope you will support Bill #483.