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Connecticut Chiropractic Association

Statement of Gina M. Carucci, DC, MS, C.Ad., DICCP
on behalf of the
Connecticut Chiropractic Association
before the
Human Service Committee
in support of
House Bill 5794
March 4, 2008

Senator Harris, Rep. Villano and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gina Carucci. I have been a practicing doctor of chiropractic in the Greater Hartford area for 13 years. I also serve as the First Vice President of the Connecticut Chiropractic Association and Legislative Committee Chairperson. I am testifying today in support of House Bill 5794, ***An Act Concerning the Availability of Chiropractic Services Under the Medicaid Program.***

Research from Medicare, managed care organizations, workers compensation and the state of Vermont all demonstrate the cost-saving benefit of chiropractic care. In 1999, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services compiled data on beneficiaries treated by a doctor of chiropractic and those who were not. The chiropractic-treated group represented 1.5 million lives or 26.8 %. This population had lower average Medicare payments per capita for *all* Medicare services ($4426. vs $8103).

Chiropractors are primary portal of entry doctors in the health care system for many issues, especially those pertaining to the spine. If we continue to be excluded from The Medicaid Program, the patients will continue to be sent to a Primary Care Physician or orthopedic specialist. Meanwhile, the Chiropractor, specially trained in spinal conditions could be seeing and treating these patients sooner and at a lower cost to the system.

A major part of our practice is taking our patients through a course of care AND introducing them to a number of things they can do to live a more healthy lifestyle. Don't you want that as part of the Medicaid program? We do this every day.

We're good enough for Medicare. We're included in worker's compensation. We provide services in HUSKY. We are the third largest physician specialty in the nation. On what basis are we excluded from Medicaid? It is blatantly unfair. It is also penny wise and pound foolish.

As I've stated, we provide services to Husky recipients and are reimbursed at a very low rate for doing so. If that patient were to go elsewhere (i.e. the primary care physician, orthopedist, neurologist or the emergency room), the cost would be far greater. Additionally, many times the patient will have to wait for several weeks to be seen, which forces them to go to the emergency room. Why would you want to put them through this? We have chiropractors who can see these patients today . . . right now.

In summary, the Connecticut Chiropractic Association supports this legislation. We would ask that you step in and mandate additional standards over this program since Medicaid is the primary health care system for low-income citizens of this state. Please pass HB 5794 and restore Chiropractic services to the Medicaid program.

Thank you for considering our position on this issue. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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