

February 6, 2009

IN SUPPORT OF SB 90

Good Afternoon Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and distinguished members of the public Health Committee

My name is Dr. Preston Long. I have been a doctor of chiropractic for over 20 years, a Diplomate with the American Board of Forensic Examiners and a Certified Disability Examiner with the National Association of Disability Evaluating Professionals. I am asking for your support for SB 90. I firmly believe there are very compelling reasons for why Informed Consent should be mandatory prior to chiropractic manipulation of the cervical spine.

Patients have a right to participate in the decision-making process regarding their personal health care. One method of assuring participation is the opportunity to communicate with the doctor and understand the basic treatment recommendations and the inherent risks involved. Informed Consent accomplishes this task. Connecticut chiropractic patients should be given this basic opportunity to participate. This is of great importance due to the fact that there is a very real risk of stroke following chiropractic adjustments.

Not to obtain informed consent can have serious consequences for both the patient and the chiropractor. If patients were also given a discharge summary with the signs of stroke then patients would know to seek emergency medical care. Time loss with a stroke is brain loss.

The risk of stroke following chiropractic manipulation is a hotly debated and contested topic in North America. The highly respected Canadian Stroke Consortium concluded that between 1 in every 100,000 chiropractic patients under 45 years of age that go to a chiropractor for neck problems will suffer a stroke. The Canadian Stroke Consortium believes between 100 and 200 strokes per year in Canada are directly caused by chiropractic manipulation. This, of course, does not include the hundreds of people per year who suffer from a chiropractic stroke here in the U.S. . I do not intend to debate the incidences of stroke following a chiropractic manipulation, but to recognize that it IS a RISK and although it might be considered rare, the effects CAN be devastating and stroke can often lead directly to death. Quoting Louis Sportelli, DC, head of the largest chiropractic Insurance Company NCMIC, "Even one cerebral vascular accident (CVA) that could have been prevented or detected early is one too many". And since no simple test exists to screen out patients to see if certain patients are at more risk than others, even a competent and skillful doctor of chiropractic can cause a patient to have a major stroke. This is why not only giving Informed Consent both orally and in writing is important, but a DISCHARGE SUMMARY , with the signs of a stroke is crucial, because if an artery is torn, it may take hours, days, even weeks for the stroke to occur. If a patient is armed with this information, it may very well save their life.

Although a growing number of chiropractors across the country and especially in Connecticut share my concerns and are in support of this bill, you should know that there are numerous factions within the field of chiropractic who have different philosophies and beliefs. In spite of the scientific evidence, these groups consistently put their business interests ahead of their patient's health and SAFETY. Their constant reaction is to smear and blackball other chiropractors who seek responsible change with our profession.

As a health care professional, I am guided by the principle that safety must come first. The time has come to mandate Informed Consent prior to chiropractic manipulation .

Thank you