



Statement of Gina M. Carucci, DC, MS, DICCP

On behalf of the

Connecticut Chiropractic Association

Before the Public Health Committee

For SB 90

February 6, 2009

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the Committee:

My name is Gina Carucci and I am a practicing chiropractor in Rocky Hill, CT. I serve the CT Chiropractic Association as First Vice President and Legislative chairperson. I am here today to offer opposition testimony to SB 90.

The CT Chiropractic Association and the malpractice carriers already recommend the use of the informed consent process. For the 14 years I have been in practice I have used such a form and process. Chiropractic as you may or may not know is one of the safest forms of healthcare available. Data from the malpractice carriers indicates that CT chiropractors pay on average \$3000/yr for a malpractice policy. This is one measure of the safety of the profession.

Cervical manipulation is not the only mechanism to potentially initiate a vertebral artery injury. The medical literature contains numerous reports of similar episodes from common medical procedures such as administering anesthesia during surgery, or while extending the neck during dental procedures. Cases of vertebrobasilar accidents have been reported which occurred during normal activities such as talking on the telephone, swimming, yoga, performing overhead work, and even during sleep. "Beauty Parlor Stroke," caused by extending the neck over a sink while washing the hair, is also well-documented as a potential cause of a vertebrobasilar stroke. (1)

Most cases of vertebrobasilar artery dissection are spontaneous in nature, that is, the history does not involve severe blunt or penetrating trauma as a precipitating factor. However, even in the cases of severe neck trauma resulting from a motor vehicle accident, a fall or a penetrating neck injury, dissections of the vertebral artery are exceedingly rare. This indicates that these arteries are **normally very elastic and resilient to injury**; it also suggests that it is **unlikely that a normal artery would be damaged by the minor strains it would experience during a skillfully performed neck adjustment by a**

**doctor of chiropractic.** In fact, recent research in the prestigious "Spine Journal" indicates that the incidence of stroke in the office of a chiropractor is no greater than it is in the office of the primary care physician, indicating that **the incidence of a stroke is temporally related and not causally.** (2)

Another study measured the forces transmitted to the vertebral artery during a cervical manipulation. This study found that the forces transmitted to the vertebral artery are less than 1/9<sup>th</sup> of the force necessary to stretch or otherwise damage the normal vertebral artery. The study noted that in fact, that manipulation forces were actually less than the forces measured during normal ranges of motion of the neck. Based on these studies, **many experts now believe that it is physically impossible for a competently performed neck adjustment to cause a vertebral artery dissection unless the artery already has a significant pre-existing weakness.** (3)

Chiropractic neck manipulation has been demonstrated to be safe and effective for a variety of conditions from whiplash, to tension headache amongst other conditions. (4,5,6) All healthcare procedures carry a risk, in fact "doing nothing" about neck and back pain carries risks as well. These risks include increased rates of disability, abuse of prescription medication or other non-prescription drugs, disruption from work and activities of daily living as well as well as disruption of social activities.

It is the opinion of the CT Chiropractic Association that SB 90 unfairly singles out a profession that has been proven to be extremely safe and effective in it's delivery of holistic healthcare. We are not opposed to the concept of informed consent. Informed consent is a process that if this committee feels is something that needs to become law, should be applied across the board to all healthcare professions for the good of the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony today,

Respectfully submitted,

Gina M. Carucci, DC, MS, DICCP

- 1) Basilar artery embolism after surgery; under general anesthesia: a case report. 1993. Neurology.

- 2) What are the Risks of Chiropractic Neck Adjustment? 2003 William J. Lauretti, DC
- 3) Risk of Vertebrobasilar Stroke and Chiropractic Care: Results of a Population Based Case-Control and Case-Crossover Study. February 15, 2008 Spine Journal
- 4) Internal Forces Sustained by the Vertebral Artery During Spinal Manipulative Therapy. 2002 Journal of Manipulative Physiological Therapeutics.
- 5) Quebec Task Force Report on Whiplash Injuries. 1995 Spine Journal
- 6) Rand Corporation Report: The Appropriateness of Manipulation and Mobilization of the Cervical Spine. 1996
- 7) Duke University Evidence Report. 2001 Evidence Report: Behavioral and Physical Treatments for Tension-Type and Cervicogenic Headache.

