

CHIROPRACTIC STROKE AWARENESS ORGANIZATION

www.chiropracticstrokeawarenessorganization.com

www.strokeawarenessandsupport.com

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Please Support SB 392 - AN ACT CONCERNING INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR
ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENTS PROVIDED BY CHIROPRACTORS AND THE
MINIMUM PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE CARRIED BY
CHIROPRACTORS

Good Morning Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. I wish to testify in support of Section 3 of SB 392.

My name is Christa Orsino-Heck.

I am President of The Chiropractic Stroke Awareness Organization and Executive Director of The Stroke Awareness and Support Association. We offer an online support community for chiropractic stroke victims and their families. Although we are based out of New York, we have many chiropractic stroke victims from Connecticut, including Danbury, Brookfield, New Preston, Kent and Newtown, Connecticut, who are not able to be here to testify.

Some of the reasons these victims cannot be here today are that many have serious physical injuries such as paralysis, inability to speak, etc., cognitive injuries such as attention and memory dysfunction and psychological issues such as depression and anxiety caused by strokes suffered after cervical manipulation. In addition, many victims are afraid to speak publicly on what has happened to them because they have been harassed and intimidated by chiropractors; some by the very chiropractors who performed the cervical manipulations that resulted in their suffering strokes. Victims have received harassing phone calls, have had insulting and demeaning comments written about them on various websites and blogs and even experienced antagonistic comments and intimidating behavior by chiropractors just recently here in Connecticut, at the Declaratory Ruling

proceedings on informed consent held in front of the State Board of Chiropractic Examiners.

I deal with chiropractic stroke victims on a regular basis within a confidential group setting. I am privy to the devastating injuries they have suffered. Most require intensive rehabilitation (including physical, occupational, speech and cognitive therapy). One stroke survivor, now in her early 30's has already incurred over \$700,000 in medical expenses...initially paralyzed, she has progressed in her recovery, however it is unlikely that she will ever be able to live a 'normal', independent life. Another victim suffers from chronic dizziness and is undergoing a very specialized type of physical therapy, called vestibular therapy. Some victims remain completely paralyzed and unable to even speak or eat, requiring 24 hour nursing care, either in a skilled nursing facility or at home.

When something does go wrong after cervical manipulation, it is horrible and life-altering. These people should be able to obtain restitution for what has happened to them by securing effective legal representation, so they may get much needed medical care. And considering that most chiropractic stroke victims are between the ages of 25 and 48, the costs associated with disability, as well as years of medical care, are astronomical, and should be a crucial consideration for enacting this Bill.

The State of Connecticut has adopted the National Quality Forum's list of adverse events, that is, adverse events that 'should', never happen. It states that, "Patient death or serious disability should never happen as a result of spinal manipulation." Spinal manipulation is listed because it is known to carry serious repercussions such as stroke and death. It has been reported that spinal manipulative therapy is done 94-96% of the time, as part of chiropractic treatment. It is not fair that the State often has to bear the medical care expenses of possible adverse events after chiropractic spinal manipulative therapy because the chiropractors may not be adequately covered.

Lastly, the State of Connecticut, and all other states in our country, has granted chiropractors the title of doctor. Most insurance companies recognize and reimburse for chiropractic care, in the same manner as medical doctors. Since they have achieved equal status to medical doctors in these ways, it is only fair that they be held to the same standard as medical doctors with regard to malpractice insurance.

Requiring chiropractors to maintain the standard one million dollar minimum in malpractice insurance, as is required by other health care practitioners including medical doctors, will ultimately allow chiropractic stroke victims to get the care they desperately need.