

CTChiro
Connecticut Chiropractic Association
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Statement of the Connecticut Chiropractic Association
House Bill 5444
Human Services Committee
March 6, 2014

Sen. Slossberg, Rep. Abercrombie and members of the committee:

My name is Dr. Chris Connaughty. I have been a practicing Chiropractic Physician for 27 years. I also serve as legislative chair of the Connecticut Chiropractic Association and represent that organization today in support of House Bill 5444, *An Act Concerning Medicaid Coverage of Chiropractic Services*.

We believe low-income recipients in Medicaid should have access to chiropractic services.

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 percent. This population had lower average Medicare payments per capita for all Medicare services (\$4,426 versus \$8,103).

We are the primary portal of entry in the health care system for many issues pertaining to the nervous, skeletal and muscular systems. If we continue to be excluded from Medicaid, all it means is that patients will be sent to see an MD or orthopaedic specialist. Meanwhile, we could be seeing and treating them sooner and at a lower cost. Without chiropractic, these people will not have a non drug alternative for care.

Our profession provides full body care, nutritional and wellness guidance, and has been the leading force in these areas, providing our patient with the tools to lead a healthier lifestyle. Don't you want that as part of the Medicaid program? This approach to the treatment of the entire person is unique in health care and leads to decreased reliance on medications, increased physical and emotional health and well being, and therefore a preventative approach for many of the chronic diseases that plague this country.

We're good enough for Medicare and the Veteran's Administration. We're included in the Worker's Compensation system and we are a mandate within the insurance industry in the State of CT. We provide services in HUSKY. We are the third largest healthcare specialty in the nation. Surveys show that patients rate their satisfaction with their chiropractic experience at a very high level. Patients desire and need our services. Let's let low-income citizens have this option as they did up until 2004.

Plain and simple, chiropractic is a much less expensive option than traditional medical care. A continued denial by the legislators of the state of CT will result in a shift toward increased payment for traditional medical care with its inherent higher costs for treatment, diagnostics and

the risks associated with prescription drugs and invasive procedures. Additionally, many times the patient will have to wait for several weeks or months to be seen by an orthopaedist or neurologist, which forces them to go to the emergency room. This will not result in dollars saved or improved health outcomes for these Medicaid patients. Meanwhile, there are chiropractors that can see these patients right now.

In coming years, Medicaid enrollments are expected to grow substantially due to federal healthcare reform. Unless chiropractic is restored fully to Medicaid, a large percentage of the population will not have access to true wellness care and what is considered to be a first line of defense towards real and meaningful conservative care.

Chiropractic first, drugs second and surgery as a last option.

Restoring chiropractic care to the Medicaid population is in the best interest of Medicaid patients and in the best interest of the financial interests of the state of CT. A happier, healthier Medicaid population gives way to a more productive work force, a happier home life, more active recreationally and better relationships.

In summary, the Connecticut Chiropractic Association supports this legislation. We would ask that you step in 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.

Dr. Chris Connaughty, DC