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Testimony of
Christopher DiPasquale

In Support of
HB 6987 An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Public Health Statutes

Before the Public Health Committee
March 18, 2015

Chairperson Gerrantana, Chairperson Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Chris DiPasquale and I am a physical therapist practicing at offices in Colchester and Hebron Connecticut. I apologize for not being present today but I was not able to arrange for coverage of my patients.

My testimony is specific to section 12 of HB 6987. This section specifies healthcare professionals that may return an athlete to participation after a concussion. I urge you to amend this section to add physical therapist to the list of professionals. Returning athletes to participation following concussion is within the scope of practice of physical therapists. All physical therapists receive extensive education and training in the evaluation and treatment of neurological conditions and in practice manage issues far more complex than those dealt with in return to participation concussion protocols. Physical therapists are named as qualified providers in the current proposed federal concussion legislation (S. 436 – Senator Menendez / H.R. 4829 – Representatives Pascrell and Capps) and in 2 prior years were also named in similar proposed federal legislation. Physical therapists are members of the CDC concussion taskforce developing concussion guidelines. Physical therapists in Connecticut and around the country are currently returning injured athletes to participation following standard concussion protocols. In my practice I commonly find myself as the sole healthcare professional providing progressive return to participation treatment for patients with concussion either self-referred or referred by a physician. In other words it is currently common practice in Connecticut for physical therapist to provide this type of care.

As awareness of concussion injury and treatment increases and as legislation expands mandates for care this is an opportunity to correct a flaw in Connecticut concussion legislation and provide our residents with added access to appropriate care.

Not including physical therapists as qualified healthcare professionals in concussion legislation will also limit the availability of physical therapists specialty board certified in sports physical therapy to the people of Connecticut. I am one of the 12 physical therapists in Connecticut currently board certified as a Sports Clinical Specialists and the national total in 2014 was 1,424. Each specialist has met American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties criteria and passed an examination administered by the National Board of Medical Examiners. These test proficiency in concussion emergency evaluation and management as well as return to participation protocols. All sports clinical specialists must recertify every 10 years. Each sports clinical specialist must demonstrate proficiency in emergency medical evaluation and management every 2 years and document a minimum 20 hours each year covering collision sports to maintain certification. Meeting the collision sport requirement will be difficult in Connecticut if physical therapists are not included in concussion legislation therefore limiting availability of this specialty care to the people of Connecticut.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am sorry I could not appear before your committee in person to provide any clarification. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any question or if you would like additional or more specific information.

Cc: Representatives Linda Orange and Gayle Mulligan