



Written Testimony of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society

**Opposing House Bill 5528 An Act Concerning Continuing Education for Health Care Providers
Who Prescribe Narcotic Drugs**

Public Health Committee – February 23, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the more than 250 orthopaedic surgeons of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to *House Bill 5528 An Act Concerning Continuing Education for Health Care Providers Who Prescribe Narcotic Drugs*.

As orthopaedic surgeons, we recognize that the use of narcotic pain medication in orthopaedic surgery is risky and there are medical and legal tensions regarding under prescribing and overprescribing pain medications as well. As physicians, we prescribe controlled substances for legitimate medical purposes and unfortunately some of the opioid pain medications end up being abused as recreational drugs or sold as street drugs. This is known as “diversion” and is a high priority action item for the Drug Enforcement Agency.

While this bill acknowledges the importance of educating physicians prescribing narcotics, it is important to note that most orthopaedic surgeons are educated through forums, webinars and informational articles by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), the national specialty society which shares the collective, national expertise of medical doctors and guidelines for prescribing. The information is thorough, extensive and readily available to the orthopaedic community throughout the year. In addition, the FDA has a program, “Extended-Release and Long-Acting Opioid Analgesics Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy,” a voluntary program to educate physicians who prescribe these narcotic pain medications and provide them with tools that enable them to counsel patients and improve safety.

The Connecticut Orthopaedic Society shares information from the AAOS on an ongoing basis and we encourage our members to take advantage of the educational and training tools afforded by the AAOS. This bill, without specifications and details for a one hour education, is not necessary as there are many other training, education and programs readily available that orthopaedists already use. We respectfully request the Committee review and consider all the education and training programs that address the national problem of opioid prescribing and oppose this bill which is a duplication of the many national efforts, including the FDA program. Thank you.

Submitted by:

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