



Written Testimony of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society

**Opposing Senate Bill 246 An Act Defining and Establishing Standards for the Practice of
Telemedicine**

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 to oppose SB 246 An Act Defining and Establishing Standards for the Practice of Telemedicine as it is written.

In the constantly changing and advancing technology in health care, there are potential benefits of telemedicine in communities where urgent medical care in extreme rural areas is not readily available or in specialties that lend themselves to non-hands on physical examination, however in Connecticut this is not a significant issue with respect to rural underserved areas. In specialties that lend itself to the technology of telemedicine it is already occurring to some degree with detailed legislated stipulation.

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons position on telemedicine identifies problems associated with telemedicine including venue, licensure, standard of care and informed consent and while this bill addresses a few of these problems, the following bill language (excerpted from SB 246) is unacceptable to the orthopaedic community as it poses a clear threat to the quality of Orthopedic and General Medical care of Connecticut citizens as it would allow out of state providers to simply register with Department of Public Health to provide telemedicine services. There are no provisions for the intricacies of necessary traditional follow up, no mandated mechanisms for information transfer to a qualified provider for ongoing care if necessary and no standards set forth that must be met given the different and less robust nature of a telemedicine encounter. It is not clear that basic malpractice coverage be carried and there is no provision anywhere for peer review process, which are standard in our CT practice venues.

excerpted from SB 246 (2) require that if the telemedicine services are being provided by an out- of-state provider who provides telemedicine services on a regular or routine basis or have been arranged by or through an insurer, then such provider shall (A) be registered with the Department of Public Health as a telemedicine provider, and (B) provide the patient with his or her registration number and information on how to file a complaint with the Department of Public Health should the patient have any complaints regarding the service provided; and (3) require the Department of Public Health to establish a telemedicine provider registry.

It is for these reasons, and the unknown fiscal cost of establishing a provider registry and the lack of secure technological systems that would ensure patient privacy and confidentiality, that we urge the Committee to oppose this bill.

The orthopaedic surgeons in CT would welcome the opportunity to meet with the sponsors of this bill and the other telemedicine related bills to discuss clear, concise and criteria specific language that would ensure that only state licensed practitioners, properly insured, practicing within our state's scope of practice statutes be considered for such activity. We feel that guidelines that ensure quality measures be met and peer review capability be in place for specialty specific practitioners to be considered for telemedicine privileges. Thank you.

Submitted by:
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