



**Testimony of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center
to the Committee on Children regarding
*HB 5141 An Act Concerning Concussions and Youth Athletic Activities
Conducted on Public Athletic Fields*
February 16, 2016**

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, members of the Committee on Children, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts about *HB 5141 An Act Concerning Concussions and Youth Athletic Activities Conducted on Public Athletic Fields*. We are David Wang, MD, MS, Medical Director and Carl Nissen, MD, from Elite Sports Medicine at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. We are submitting this testimony in support of this bill.

Connecticut Children's is a nationally recognized, 187-bed not-for-profit children's hospital serving as the primary teaching hospital for the University of Connecticut School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics. Connecticut Children's is consistently named among the best in the nation for several of its pediatric specialties in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* "Best Children's Hospitals" rankings.

A comprehensive array of pediatric services are available at our hospitals in Hartford and Waterbury, with neonatal intensive care units in Hartford (Level 4) and the University of Connecticut Health Center (Level 3), along with a state-of-the-art ambulatory surgery center, five specialty care centers and 10 practices across the state and in Massachusetts. Our Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Center and Primary Care Center are the busiest between Boston and New York. Connecticut Children's has more than 2,400 employees with a medical staff of nearly 1,100, practicing in more than 30 subspecialties.

If the State of Connecticut wants to maintain access to the full spectrum of pediatric health care services for all of its children, there must be a relationship between Medicaid cost coverage for the services Connecticut Children's provides and Medicaid volumes. While the number of children served by Connecticut Children's has risen, Medicaid cost coverage has decreased since 2008 from 91% to a projected 65% in 2016. This has resulted in Connecticut Children's Medicaid shortfall increasing from \$7.6 million to \$65 million per year during the same time period.

A concussion is a functional injury to the brain resulting from a traumatic hit to the head, face, neck or a blow to the body that delivers an impulsive force to the head (i.e. whiplash). Concussions require prompt diagnosis and treatment. They also happen to be one of the top sports-related injuries. That is why Elite Sports Medicine has developed a comprehensive, sports-related concussion program for adolescent and young adult athletes.

We are pleased that the State of Connecticut has taken concerns about concussions seriously over the past several years, enacting legislation that will help protect young athletes. House Bill 5141 would

require operators of youth athletic activities who utilize public athletic fields to follow concussion protocols substantially similar to those currently used for intramural and interscholastic athletic activities. We support this bill because any opportunity to expand the scope of protection for young athletes is a step in the right direction. Systems and protocols that help coaches, parents and athletes know the facts about concussions rather than the myths will help more kids stay safe and healthy.

We would be happy to serve as a resource for you as you debate this proposed legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Jane Baird, Connecticut Children's Director of Government Relations, at 860-837-5557.