

February 14, 2016

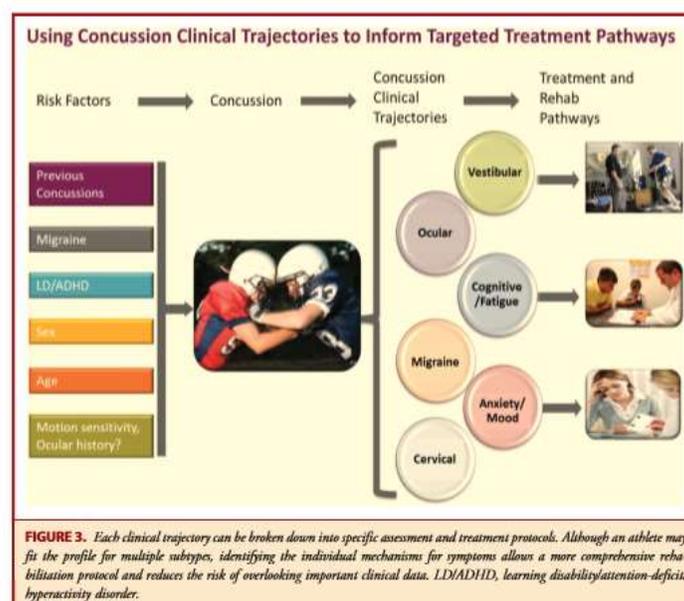
R.B. No. 5130 Committee on Public Health- *An Act Concerning Clearance of Student Athletes with Concussions for Participation in Team Activities*

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Crisco, Representative Riley, and distinguished Members of the Committee on Public Health,

My name is Karen Laugel. I am Chair of the Connecticut American Academy of Pediatrics (CT AAP) Traumatic Brain Injury-‘Return to Learn’ Initiative and a Board Member of the Connecticut Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board. I am also a pediatrician with thirty-five years of experience and currently the medical director of a children’s head injury practice. On behalf of the CT AAP and the children we serve, I am submitting **testimony against** the addition of physical therapists to the list of licensed health care professionals who may independently clear a student athlete who has suffered a concussion for participation in team activities, i.e. the proposed change as stated in Raised Bill No. 5130 *An Act Concerning Clearance of Student Athletes with Concussions for Participation in Team Activities*.

Physical therapists are valuable members of our rehabilitation team, but they are not trained in the comprehensive medical management of children with head injury. Note that physical therapists have direct access to patients and are not required to work under the oversight of a physician. As such, the proposed change in R.B. 5130 would allow physical therapists to become independent primary care providers for children with head injuries.

A child who has sustained a head injury can present with complex problems:



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In addition, an injured child who successfully completes physical therapy may have *persistent* neurological, cognitive, visual, and/or mental health issues that require proper diagnosis and medical management.

Current legislation allows for the collaboration of medical, athletic, educational, and rehabilitation team members before 'making the final call' regarding a child's clearance after a head injury. I urge you to continue to support a team approach in the child's recovery management and **vote against** independent clearance by physical therapists, as proposed in R.B. 5130.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Laugel, M.D., FAAP
Chair, CT AAP TBI-RTL Initiative
Assistant Clinical Professor, Quinnipiac University School of Medicine
Board Member, CT TBI Advisory Board