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Testimony: **Raised Bill No. 5130 An Act Concerning Clearance of Student Athletes with Concussions for Participation in Team Activities**

February 16, 2016

Good Morning: Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee.

I want to thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA). I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association. I speak in support of: **Raised Bill No. 5130 An Act Concerning Clearance of Student Athletes with Concussions for Participation in Team Activities**

Concussion is a brain injury and is defined as a complex pathological physiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces. Several common features that incorporate clinical, pathologic and biomechanical injury constructs that may be utilized in defining the nature of a concussive head injury include:

1. Concussion may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an "impulsive" force transmitted to the head.
2. Concussion typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurologic function that resolves spontaneously.

However in some cases, symptoms and signs may evolve over a number of minutes to hours.

3. Concussion may result in neurological pathological changes, but the acute clinical symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than a structural injury and, as such, no abnormality is seen on standard structural neurological imaging studies.

4. Concussion results in a graded set of clinical symptoms that may or may not involve loss of consciousness. Resolution of the clinical and cognitive symptoms typically follows a sequential course. However, it is important to note that in some cases symptoms may be prolonged.

Return To Play

It was unanimously agreed that no return to play on the day of concussive injury should occur. There are data demonstrating that at the collegiate and high school level, athletes allowed to RTP on the same day may demonstrate NP deficits post injury that may not be evident on the sidelines and are more likely to have delayed onset of symptoms. This research further delineates a stepwise progression to evaluate return to play and should be used as a guideline in decision-making. (Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine 3/13 Vol.23 Issue 2 p 89-117)

Youth Concussion injuries are of major concern, research literature is readily available and details signs, symptoms, variations, and outcomes of treatment, return to play criteria. Current research, that is in progress is evaluating different modalities of treatment that are exam the affect of modified guided exercise in the treatment of Concussions in place of mandated rest.” I suggest investigation of new research Sports Medicine Concussion Program (University of Pittsburg Medical Concussion Program).

Therefore Based on the aforementioned information and in order to protect the young athletes’ in our State we strongly urge the members of the Public Health

Committee to support **Raised Bill No. 5130 An Act Concerning Clearance of Student Athletes with Concussions for Participation in Team Activities.** It is a major Public Health issue and this legislation focuses on protecting our youth.

Thank you

Mary Jane M. Williams PhD., RN

Chair, Government Relation, Connecticut Nurses Association

Professor Emeritus Central Connecticut State University