

February 16, 2016

Re: HB 5130 – An Act Concerning Clearance of Student Athletes with Concussions for Participation in Team Activities

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee,

On behalf of the Connecticut Chiropractic Association I am here to address House Bill HB 5130 – An Act Concerning Clearance of Student Athletes with Concussions for Participation in Team Activities. Please be assured the Connecticut Chiropractic Association stands behind the efforts of the committee and legislature to bring improved health care delivery to Connecticut's youth.

Since 2010, Connecticut Public Act 1466 (Section 10-149b and c of the general statutes) requires intramural and interscholastic athletic programs to follow particular concussion policies to help reduce the incidence and effects of concussion on intramural and interscholastic athletes. The concussion policies are well received and provide direction for boards of education, health care providers, athletic directors, coaches, school health personnel, students and parents or guardians to follow. The policies in particular require a concussed athlete to receive return to play clearance from a "licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions." Licensed health care professionals recognized in the law include medical and osteopathic doctors, advanced practice registered nurses, physician assistants and certified athletic trainers. Physician level health care professionals who are trained and legally recognized to provide concussion management of patients of all ages in Connecticut include medical, osteopathic, chiropractic and naturopathic doctors. Only medical and osteopathic doctors are included in the law. The law also recognizes a panel of representatives from the medical and athletic trainer's professions to work with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference and Department of Public Health to establish concussion policies for the Department of Education for distribution to all Boards of Education. There is no representation from the chiropractic and naturopathic professions on this panel.

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The CCA submits the inclusion of chiropractic doctors for return to play determinations and a chiropractic doctor representative from a chiropractic organization to sit on the concussion policy panel are essential to the law.

Licensed in Connecticut since 1917, chiropractic doctors have independently and interdependently on sports medicine teams provided examination and management services, including return to play determination for concussion related injuries sustained in athletics, recreational activities, personal injuries and motor vehicle collisions. Chiropractic doctors are recognized in Connecticut Statute Sec. 10-209 to determine physical activity status in public schools. Chiropractic doctors have been involved with school and youth organized sports medicine for many decades. Chiropractic doctors affiliated with the Connecticut Chiropractic Association have provided sports medicine care and served as medical directors for the Nutmeg State Games for 25 years. Connecticut has two chiropractic doctors who have served as medical directors for the Nutmeg State Games and subsequently served at the United States Olympic Training Center providing sports medicine care at the training center and with a particular sport for events throughout the country. Since 2009, the Director of Sports Medicine Clinics for the United States Olympic Committee is a chiropractic doctor. Chiropractic doctors are affiliated with many professional teams and leagues including the NFL, MLB, NHL, NBA and MLS.

The Connecticut Chiropractic Association submits the concussion policies for intramural and interscholastic athletics must include chiropractic doctors as health care professionals recognized to determine return to play status of the athlete and in helping to establish policy. Including the DC for return to play determination and including a DC from a chiropractic organization on the concussion policies panel for intramural and interscholastic athletics will establish a first place team of professional organizations and professionals responsible for guarding youth health, well being and brain function.

Thank you for considering our position.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Duenas, DC, DABCN, FICC

1st Vice President

Chair, Government Relations Committee