

March 12, 2019

Re: HB 7159 An Act Addressing Opioid Use.

Senator Fonfara, Senator Witkos, Representative Cheeseman and members of the General Law Committee

My name is Dr. Richard Duenas and I am the Government Relations Chairperson of the Connecticut Chiropractic Association. We commend you and Governor Lamont for remaining diligent on this opioid crisis to reduce the use and abuse of opioids. This bill revises the general statutes for opioid prescription and control, and should help alleviate the crisis. We also commend the work done by the Workgroup of the Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Policy Council and its recommendation to utilize non-drug care to help alleviate chronic pain and the opioid crisis:

"Physical therapy, acupuncture, massage, and chiropractic care should be part of the response to chronic pain. Based on available literature regarding alternative opioid treatment therapies, we recommend, as a first phase, targeting changes in access to these four interventions for two types of chronic pain: low back pain and neck pain. Given experience and results of phase one, additional types of chronic pain could be added."

There is more than sufficient science and clinical based evidence that firmly supports the use of chiropractic care on the front lines of health care for conditions that may lead to opioid use and abuse. Unfortunately, these chiropractic benefits may be suppressed due to various health care policies within the health insurance, workers compensation, and public healthcare systems which may contribute to the opioid crisis. Disclosing to patients the benefits of chiropractic and other non-pharmaceutical treatment prior to prescribing opioid medication for chronic pain will help reduce the use and abuse of opioid medication.

We suggest amending HB7159 to include the recommendation from the Workgroup of the Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Policy Council as attached to this testimony.

Respectfully,



Richard Duenas, D.C.

Government Relations Chairperson

**Connecticut Chiropractic Association**  
**Proposal on Treating Chronic Pain without Opioids**  
**March 2019**

H.B. No. 7159 'AN ACT ADDRESSING OPIOID USE', to implement the Governor's budget recommendations

**As part of Section 7 of HB 7159:**

Sec. 7. (NEW) (Effective October 1, 2019) A prescribing practitioner, as defined in section 20-14c of the general statutes, who prescribes an opioid drug, as defined in section 20-14o of the general statutes, for the treatment of pain for a patient for a duration greater than twelve weeks shall establish a treatment agreement with the patient. The treatment agreement shall, at a minimum, include treatment goals, risks of using opioids, urine drug screens, discontinuation of opioids and expectations regarding the continuing treatment of pain with opioids.

**CCA recommends:**

(a) before starting a patient on an opioid when such patient seeks treatment for chronic pain, a health care practitioner shall inform, refer or prescribe to the patient any of the following non-pharmacological treatment alternatives, based on the practitioner's clinical judgment and the availability of the treatment:

- chiropractic services by a chiropractor licensed under chapter 372,
- acupuncture by an acupuncturist licensed under chapter 384c,
- physical therapy by a physical therapist licensed under chapter 376,
- massage therapy by a massage therapist licensed under chapter 384a.

(b) nothing in this section should be construed to require that one or more of the treatment alternatives set forth in subsection (a) are required to be exhausted prior to the patient receiving a prescription for an opioid.

(c) nothing in this section shall preclude a practitioner from simultaneously prescribing an opioid.

(d) the commissioner shall

- recommend guidelines for the use of evidence-based, non-pharmaceutical interventional therapies to treat chronic pain that include, but are not limited to, chiropractic treatment and services, acupuncture, physical therapy and massage therapy
- prepare with representatives from the chiropractic and acupuncture professions, a document that informs patients of the benefits derived from non-pharmacological treatment of any condition that causes chronic pain to be distributed to patients by prescribers when a prescription for opioid medication is made

(e) the commissioner shall conduct an outreach and marketing campaign to the public and healthcare consumers about the methods available for treating chronic pain that do not involve the use of an opioid drug.