

Vermont Senate Finance Committee Testimony
Support for S135 Chiropractic Physician reimbursement parity
Dr. Erik W. Hemmett: President Vermont Chiropractic Association
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- **Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Dr. Erik Hemmett. I am a chiropractic physician and president of the Vermont Chiropractic Association. I live in Richmond and have practices in South Burlington and Richmond.**
- **I am here today to support the pay parity language in S135 that requires parity in reimbursement for Doctors of Chiropractic to other physician-level providers for providing the exact same services.**
- Doctors of Chiropractic are a physician-level, primary conservative treatment option for neck and back pain without the use of opiates or surgery
- Research studies show that chiropractic care for back pain is cost-effective, and has high patient satisfaction
- Private insurance companies pay physician-level providers for services based on the submission of a claim using one or more specific CPT codes which identify each individual service performed. These codes are not specific to a profession but are utilized by all physician-level providers.
- Doctors of Chiropractic perform a full range of diagnostic and therapeutic services using the same exact service codes that other physician-level providers do.
- A CPT code or service has a specific definition that defines exactly what the provider rendering the service must legally do in order to bill that service regardless of their license. All providers providing that code/service are held to the same professional management and liability standards for that code/service. This is a very transparent process. The definitions, expectations and accountability are clear.
- BCBSVT testified last week in the Health and Welfare committee, and we agree, that they reimburse all community providers (non hospital based) the same amount for the same service. Most chiropractors are community based, so when it comes to reimbursing chiropractors, this provision will not affect BCBS at all.
- MVP testified that they do have unfair reimbursement policies but that they prefer that the Green Mountain Care Board should be the ones to fix them.
- The Joint Fiscal Office testified that providing reimbursement parity for chiropractic physicians will not cost the state anything because the state uses BCBSVT for employee, teachers and teacher's retirement coverage.
- The Green Mountain Care Board testified that they did not want any language passed that could tie their hands if they do restructure the payment model system.
- Everyone agrees that MVP has unfair reimbursement policies against chiropractic physicians.

- For example, MVP reimburses chiropractors \$15 for the exact same service (same CPT code) that they reimburse a community-based Medical, Osteopathic or Naturopathic physician approximately \$115 for. A 665% difference. MVP reimburses chiropractors \$0, nothing for, some medically necessary and covered services, for which they reimburse other physician-level providers \$25-\$40.
- Legislating chiropractic physician reimbursement parity will not hinder the GNCB reform efforts. Any payment reform that they undertake certainly should be modeled on fairness and transparency- which is all we are asking for.
- Vermonters want to end discriminatory reimbursement practices and move towards a more fair and transparent system.

Thank you