

**Vermont Senate Health and Welfare Committee Testimony  
Request to include Doctors of Chiropractic in Section 15 of S135  
Provider Pay Parity**

**Dr. Erik W. Hemmett: President Vermont Chiropractic Association  
April 17, 2015**

**Chiropractic**

- **I am here to request that this committee add Doctors of Chiropractic to the provider parity language of section 15 of S135: Equal pay for equal services.**
- Neck and back pain are a huge financial and quality of life burden to Vermonters with limited safe and effective conservative treatment options.
- Policies to promote high-quality conservative treatment options that do not rely solely on drugs or surgery are needed in order to ease this burden.
- Doctors of Chiropractic are a physician-level, primary conservative treatment option for neck and back pain without the use of opiates or surgery
- We collaborate with other providers to treat pain in patients
- Research studies show that chiropractic care for back pain is cost-effective, and has high patient satisfaction
- Doctors of Chiropractic are holistic in diagnostic assessment looking at the root cause of the condition as well as the treatment. We are not limited to just one service. We perform examinations, chiropractic joint manipulations, therapeutic exercises, stretches, activities of daily living modification , ergonomic, postural and nutritional counseling.

**Pay Parity**

- For many years insurance companies have unfairly reimbursed chiropractic physicians less than other physician-level providers for providing the exact same quality service or CPT code simply because they are chiropractors.
- By **adding chiropractic physicians to section 15 of S135** and passing S135, it will right this wrong, not only for chiropractors, but for other physician-level providers that provide the same services.
- Private insurance companies as well as medicare and medicaid 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.
- 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.

CPT codes are not specific to a type of provider license but are common to all provider types. 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.

- Discussion about fair payment for same services, and CPT codes, used by a range of health care providers should be simple. CPT has a clear definition of exactly what that service is. CPT service codes have direct oversight and input from a range of provider groups. This allows providers to have a voice in their development and modification. This system creates a much more transparent healthcare system.
- There is no reasonable basis for paying chiropractic physician providers different rates for providing the same exact service.
- Any physician-level provider licensed to perform a procedure within the provider's scope is assumed to be competent and is legally bound to fulfill the definition of that CPT service code.
- Any physician-level provider licensed to perform a CPT service procedure should be paid fairly and equitably regardless of their license or the location of the service.
- For any given procedure, essentially equivalent base skills, resources and risk are carried with the procedure regardless of the provider performing it. As such, there is no basis to make payment differentials based on the individual provider's license, or the individual provider's practice setting. This is why the system uses CPT codes – they are intended to be independent of provider type.
- This bill should not raise premiums or costs for insurers. The insurers have the right to lower other fees, raise the chiropractic fees to meet that amount which they pay other professions for the same service, or they can find a median rate for all providers delivering the same services.
- **Please add chiropractic physicians to section 15 of S135 and pass S135**

**Thank you**

