

Senate Bill 2060-In Opposition  
Industry, Business, and Labor Committee  
67<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of North Dakota  
January 11, 2021

Good morning Chairman Klein, Vice Chairman Larsen, and Industry, Business, and Labor Committee members,

My name is Joan Connell. As a pediatrician in Bismarck, and mother of two teens, I am asking you for a Do-Not-Pass decision on section 12 of Senate Bill 2060. Section 12 would allow chiropractors to perform sports physical exams. I oppose this section due to lack of adequate training of chiropractors to perform/assess the necessary components of pediatric history and physical exam. I have included a chiropractic curriculum that I found online via this link <https://www.nuhs.edu/academics/college-of-professional-studies/chiropractic-medicine/curriculum/course-descriptions/> which serves as proof of my previous statement. The fact that chiropractors would make this request for this increase in scope of practice during this particular legislative year further proves the lack of comprehension/inadequate training related to pediatric care that they received as chiropractic students for the following reasons:

1. Due to the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in mental health issues for our population, including children and adolescents  
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/interim-guidance-on-supporting-the-emotional-and-behavioral-health-needs-of-children-adolescents-and-families-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/> . Those seeing patients who come to the clinic for a sports physical must be capable of screening, assessing, intervening and managing the mental health issues that will arise during an increased percentage of visits (see PHQ-4 brief anxiety/depression screening tool that is part of the NDHSAA sports physical form found in this link [https://ndhsaa.com/files/NDHSAA\\_Physical\\_Form.pdf](https://ndhsaa.com/files/NDHSAA_Physical_Form.pdf) ). Recognition and best practices for treatment of mental health issues in children and adolescents cannot be taught in a general mental health course. In my own practice, I have noted a significant upswing in the intensity and volume of my pediatric patients struggling with mental illness since October 2020. I am not presenting live/virtually today during this hearing because it is being held on Monday, a regularly scheduled clinic day for me, and I do not feel comfortable being absent for my patients during this very difficult time for them. I cannot find a part of the chiropractic curriculum that would provide adequate training to assess and manage these issues in children/adolescents.
2. Due to potential cardiac complications of coronavirus, the AAP has published guidelines for more complex evaluation before return to play  
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/> . Given the large rate of asymptomatic cases, consideration for whether this additional evaluation needs to be done must be given during all sports physicals this year, with understanding and ability to perform this evaluation, interpret the results, and provide appropriate recommendations for those who require it. This will be challenging, even for physicians who have abundantly more education, training, and experience. Missing a cardiac

complication in a youth returning to sports could be a fatal mistake. Again, I do not see adequate coverage of this topic in the chiropractic student's curriculum.

3. Due to delay in seeking care associated with the pandemic, some North Dakota children and adolescents are behind in their immunizations. The sports physical presents an opportunity for recognition and subsequent administration of vaccines. Given that NDHSAA waived the mandate of a sports physical for the 2020-21 academic year, this puts more North Dakota children in the under immunized category. Chiropractors are not capable of immunizing patients. Chiropractors performing sports physicals will either lead to parents needing to make another visit for their child/adolescent to be immunized or children remaining under immunized. Neither of these options seems to be in the best interest of North Dakotan children and families.

In closing, during this pandemic we have temporarily increased scope of practice in many fields to make sure we could optimize access to some type of care due to the increased number of sick patients complicated by the number of traditional healthcare workers missing work due to illness or quarantine. Moving forward, I urge you to ask yourself, with every request to increase scope of practice, if the request is truly what is best for the patient, the North Dakota citizen whom you are serving, and if this satisfies the goal of increasing access to QUALITY care. While I am not here in person, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have via email, phone (701-425-2067), or meeting. Thanks so much for your consideration of my concerns.

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Pediatrician