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August 1, 2013

Sherry Thomas
Policy Coordinator
Washington State Department of Health
Health Systems Quality Assurance
P.O. Box 47850
Olympia, WA 98504-7850

Re: American Medical Association Opposition to House Bill 1573

Dear Ms. Thomas:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, the AMA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding House Bill (H.B.) 1573, which would expand the scope of practice of chiropractors to include performance of sports physicals for school athletes and physical examinations for commercial truck drivers. Because chiropractors do not have sufficient education and training to perform these comprehensive exams, the AMA opposes H.B. 1573.

Athletic activity and commercial driving can pose health risks, particularly to individuals who have unidentified health conditions. Examinations prior to engaging in these activities are required because a proper medical examination can identify potentially dangerous conditions and ultimately prevent injury or death. Patient safety requires that the health care professionals who perform these exams be educated and trained in comprehensive medical diagnosis and treatment.

Significant differences exist between the education and training of chiropractors compared to physicians. Medical school covers all organ systems and includes the important aspects of preventive, acute, chronic, continuing, rehabilitative, and end-of-life care. This medical education includes training in relevant medical specialties, such as cardiology, neurology, pulmonology, orthopedics, and emergency medicine. Medical school also includes extensive education in pharmacology. After four years of medical school, physicians complete an additional 3-5 years of residency training, during which resident physicians must demonstrate the ability to apply their knowledge in the care of actual patients, under the supervision of senior physicians, as they gain increasing independence in patient management.

Even with the 18 hours of additional class time proposed by H.B. 1573, chiropractors are wholly unprepared to perform comprehensive examinations of school athletes and commercial truck drivers. While chiropractors do complete four years of chiropractic school, which includes education in the basic sciences, the focus of chiropractic school is largely treatment of the musculoskeletal system—the body's bones, muscles, cartilage, tendons, ligaments, joints, and other connective tissues. Chiropractors lack the range of exposure to and depth of knowledge about all organ systems necessary to perform a comprehensive and complete examination. Chiropractors also lack education and

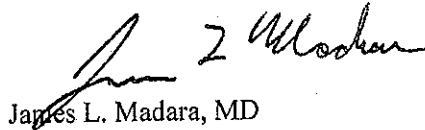
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training in pharmacology and prescription medicines, and as such, are not prepared to evaluate an applicant for a commercial driver's license who might be on multiple medications.

For these reasons, the AMA opposes H.B. 1573, and urges the members of the Sunrise Review Committee to do the same. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Schleiter, JD, LLM, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at kristin.schleiter@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4783.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L. Madara", is written over the printed name.

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Washington State Medical Association