

Danielle Eifler  
Bath  
LD 1220

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Gramlich, and honorable members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee,

I am Danielle Eifler and I am resident of the town of Bath. I am submitting testimony in opposition of LD 1220, An Act to Allow Chiropractors to Treat Dog and Equids.

I am a veterinary neurologist and neurosurgeon, practicing veterinary medicine since 2001 and practicing veterinary neurology/neurosurgery since 2005. This specialty required 11 years of post-secondary education including a 3 year Bachelor of Science, 4 year Veterinary Medicine degree, 1 year general internship, 1 year specialty internship, and a 3 year residency in Veterinary Neurology/Neurosurgery. Given my specialized training, I have been in the unique position to witness first-hand the effects of chiropractic manipulations on dogs with back conditions.

One example I would like to provide is of a middle-aged Dachshund mix that presented to me on an emergency basis for a sudden onset of hind limb paralysis. The patient had been experiencing spinal pain for several days and was having difficulty walking, knuckling her feet when attempting to walk. The patient received a chiropractic adjustment and the patient's owner reported that their dog vocalized loudly when this procedure was performed and was then suddenly unable to bear weight on their hind limbs, dragging them behind. By the time the patient presented to me, they were not only completely paralyzed but were also unable to feel their toes, indicating a severe spinal cord injury. MRI confirmed the cause of the paralysis was a ruptured intervertebral disc. I was able to perform surgery immediately however, unfortunately, the patient did not regain use of their limbs and remained paralyzed. This terrible tragedy occurred because the chiropractor failed to recognize a common condition in veterinary medicine called Canine Intervertebral Disc Disease (a degeneration of the intervertebral discs that is not analogous to intervertebral disc extrusions in people) and then also failed to recognize the severity of the patient's signs, performing a chiropractic procedure that is contraindicated in this situation. •Canine Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD) has several categories depending on age, breed, and type of disc degeneration. The most common form of this condition, historically called Canine Intervertebral Disc Disease Type I (IVDD type I), is a genetic condition resulting in a very specific type of disc degeneration. There is not an equivalent condition in humans. These patients have fragile intervertebral discs that degenerate at a young age and are very prone to rupture. If one of these discs becomes damaged, the motion of a chiropractic adjustment can cause the disc to rupture into the spinal canal, which is what occurred in the example provided above. When a patient with signs of IVDD presents to a veterinarian, the most important recommendation is that they rest very quietly and do not move suddenly to avoid further damage and subsequent rupture of the disc. Chiropractic manipulations are a direct contraindication to this. It must be stressed that the pet's spine in these instances is not "out of alignment", there is rather an underlying disease that must be treated by a medical professional with the proper knowledge.

In the example provided above, I have no doubt that this chiropractor's intentions were for the best, however, their lack of knowledge of veterinary medicine resulted in this patient never being able to walk again.

In general, across the country, Veterinary Neurologists as a group feel strongly that there is no place for chiropractic adjustments in canine patients. This is an important topic that is at the forefront of discussions in Veterinary Neurology as we have directly been witness to the devastating consequences of individuals without knowledge of veterinary medicine performing medical procedures.

If there are any questions regarding this testimony or I can be of further service, please don't hesitate to reach out. I am proud of my profession and the care we provide to help animals that do not have a voice for themselves. We must be their

voice which is why it is so important that this testimony be heard.

Sincerely,

Danielle Eifler, DVM, DACVIM (Neurology), Certified Veterinary Neurosurgeon