

**Testimony for Public Hearing
Senate Committee on Health Care
May 30, 2017**

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Regarding: Information Session | Chiropractic Treatment of Concussion

Chairwoman Monnes Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

I am Amelia Psmythe. I live in SW Portland. I'm a full-time single parent of two teenage boys; and I work as a nonprofit executive from a virtual home office. I am here as a former patient of Dr. Glen Zielinski, to share my story of brain rehabilitation at Northwest Functional Neurology; and to testify in support of the addition of chiropractors to the list of health care providers approved to authorize "return to play" after concussion.

In my introduction, I mentioned my work environment in order to underscore the complete reliance I have on a well-functioning brain in order to sustain my occupation. I need to be capable of analysis, conceptualization, abstract reasoning, and prioritization, all while multi-tasking across several computer programs, and speaking or presenting on a telephone or videoconference. It's intense, but my situation is not unique -- the same demands are at play for most workers today, as well as most students. From our performance, to our personality -- in functional terms, we are, in many ways, our brains. Thank goodness then, that awareness of the frequency and impact of concussions is becoming better known.

Despite being generally aware of concussions, particularly from caring for my boys following mild sports concussions, when I was badly concussed, I didn't realize right away how hurt I was. I now understand that this phenomenon is common; and in my situation, without another adult in my home or an in-person office where someone would have experienced me across many hours and days (and surely noticed my struggle), there was a gap of time where I was simply following the patterns of my daily life with less and less success.

I started seeing an Occupational Therapist and a Chiropractor for my shoulder, neck and jaw pain, and both of them quickly recognized I had a concussion. A couple weeks further into their care, they both responded with increasing alarm as I reported my daily headaches, extreme fatigue,

sensitivity to light and sound, confusion, disorientation – particularly when I tried to sleep, emotional dis-regulation, and inability to follow all the way through on tasks. At work I was struggling to process information efficiently, type accurately, or speak with fluency. I did not feel safe to travel cross-country on my own, and certainly could not perform my usual functions that involve quite a bit of public speaking.

My chiropractor, Dr. Todd Turnbull, referred me to Dr. Glen Zielinski. Dr. Z's team did a thorough intake evaluation and crafted a specific care path for my rehabilitation. Each treatment was a highly individualized experience, where the therapist would test and regulate the prescribed exercises based on how I showed up that day; and Dr. Z would check in and monitor my progress with each appointment.

- **Within 1 month:** headaches began to dissipate, and neck & jaw pain lessened
- **Within 2 months:** began to multi-task at work, though still needed frequent breaks
- **Within 4 months:** increased energy, and I could travel for work again
- **Within 6 months:** resumed public speaking and experienced improved functionality at home. I also enjoyed a steadying of my emotional temperament
- **Within 10 months:** processing at meta-level again — synthesizing inputs from many sources at once, at rapid speed and in public forums

I am very grateful for the chiropractors that have diagnosed and treated mild concussions throughout my twenty years' experience raising active boys; and for my chiropractor's choice to refer me to rehabilitation with Dr. Zielinski, a chiropractor with advanced training in functional neurology.

The matter before you reads as an administrative fix, consistent with the purview of chiropractor's scope of practice and license in Oregon. Adding them to the "return to play" list is sensible, and corrects what appears to be an earlier oversight.

Thank you.

Amelia H. Psmythe