**ADDED PROTECTION FOR ACCIDENT VICTIMS**

* The proposed legislation would create a new class 1 misdemeanor, “Unlawful Solicitation of Injured Persons.”
* The new statute would prohibit a person, firm or corporation from contacting a motor vehicle accident victim by telephone or in person for the purpose of steering the accident victim to a certain health care provider or lawyer.
* Prohibited telephone contact would include text messaging.
* The prohibition against soliciting would expire 90 days after the accident.
* People who solicit motor vehicle accident victims for a living are commonly referred to as “runners.” Runners obtain accident victims’ contact information from police accident reports.
* Under existing statutes and rules, health care providers and lawyers are prohibited from paying runners to solicit patients or clients. However, these laws have proven difficult to enforce because payments are often concealed or disguised.
* Runners themselves are not currently subject to any direct legal constraints. For example, it is lawful for auto repair shops to employ runners, and it would remain lawful under the new statute.
* The proposed legislation is designed to prevent runners from soliciting in behalf of health care providers and lawyers only. No other occupations or professions would be subject to the new statute.
* Health care providers and lawyers would continue to have the right to solicit accident victims by sending targeted solicitation letters through the mail, which is the method recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court.
* The N.C. Board of Chiropractic Examiners is proposing this legislation. The Board’s legislative liaison is Dr. Ricky Sides, telephone: (336) 972-5500; email: sides@ncchiroboard.com.