

We Get Letters & E-Mail

It's Sugarless!

Dear Editor,

The recent article, "FCP Survey Results," in the May 20, 2002 edition of *DC* (www.chiroweb.com/archives/20/11/06.html) is a watershed event. The Foundation for Chiropractic Progress (FCP) and its leadership are to be commended for the honesty and integrity of asking straightforward questions without regard for sugarcoating the answers or soft-peddling their absence of intraprofessional political correctness. Good job!

In order to achieve our objectives, we must first understand the obstacles so that an effective strategy can be mounted to resolve them. This survey, plus the survey conducted by the ACA in the late 1990s, concur; we do not have the trust of the public. Political legal activism, scientific research, and individual, grassroots patient contact can only go so far in solving this problem. The profession must pull itself up by its bootstraps and alter its behaviors, which are considered by our public as being objectionable and untrustworthy.

It does little good to point fingers at the "Sorry State of Medical Care" (*DC*, May 20, and on line at www.ChiroWeb.com/archives/20/11/14.html) when we offer little better. Headlines of chiropractors participating in prostitution rings, personal injury fraud and Medicare fraud abound. And regular investigative reports continue to show doctors of chiropractic using questionable techniques of diagnosis (like surrogate testing, vitamin pills on bellies, etc).

Professional behavior at the individual and the organizational level is a real issue. Many may remember the Wilk trials (yes, plural; there were two). In the first, chiropractic lost the case. Why? Because the jury was (inappropriately - from a legal perspective) allowed to see intraprofessional and practice promotional materials used in places like the Parker Foundation seminars, which turned the jury away from the issues to focus on the behaviors.

Now we have history repeating itself. The Parker College meetings in Las Vegas and Dallas effectively equated our profession - each one of us - to a "Mickey Mouse" organization with its chanting (to the tune of the Mickey Mouse Club theme song) - "S-U-B - L-U-X - A-T-I-O-N - free!"

Nice! Chiropractic equals Mickey Mouse.

What we sometimes forget is that behavior is observed. It has influence on attitudes and perceptions. At the Dallas meeting, there were people in that room who did not share the same cavalier attitude toward chiropractic, the profession. Some were DCs and others were not. Those who were not included people with political connections; some employees; and some patients. The Dallas meeting was held in a hotel just a few miles from my office. What a great pleasure to come in on Monday morning, to be greeted by my medical colleagues and my patients, wanting an explanation as to what on earth would compel a group of educated individuals to behave in such a manner!

Does it affect us as a whole or is this just an innocent, private activity, harmless in intent and

consequence? Well, the Wilk trial was one shot across our bow. Last year, the behaviors of some members and organizations in this profession cost the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College its affiliation with York University. Why? Because they were forced to defend against the behaviors, rather than address the issues of the quality of our science and the value of our service. The Las Vegas antics reached into NIH and affected those involved in discussions on chiropractic issues. The Dallas meeting reached into the North American Spine Society, the largest and most politically influential spine organization on the continent.

The answer is the same, and the FCP points it out again. Only 23 percent of patients with back or neck pain would go to a chiropractor. Only 46 percent of consumers believe that chiropractors are trustworthy - behind MDs (81 percent) and physical therapists (62 percent). In this profession, messengers are usually shot. Thanks, again to *DC* and the FCP, for telling the truth without sugarcoating.

Prostitution, fraud, abuse and Mickey Mouse. It is no wonder that we lag in the public eye. Medicine and its political opposition didn't create that. We did, and only we can stop it. Opposing the activities of members and organizations within our profession, similar to those described here, is a strategy that will help alter public attitudes, lower barriers and empower our political activism, legal maneuverings and scientific foundations. Without vocal opposition to such activity, our public still will see us as untrustworthy.

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Straight to the Point

Dear Editor:

When I read your "ChiroPoll" in the May 20 issue, at first I thought it was a joke. Over 65 percent would prescribe over-the-counter drugs if they could?

I am embarrassed that fellow "chiropractors" have no more understanding or knowledge of their own profession than this. My response to them is simple: Get out of chiropractic and enter some medical school somewhere! You are not chiropractors now, and you will never be in the future. Do the true believers and the rest of humanity a favor and get the hell out!

You are obviously wasting your time and hurting the rest of us who are trying to help people the way chiropractic was meant to be, using the body's innate ability to heal. If you want to play "medical quack," go somewhere else and put other initials after your name. You're a disgrace to the majority who practice chiropractic!

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