

Doctor Wins Libel Suit over Anonymous Internet Posting

Dynamic Chiropractic Staff

A precedent may have been set in a case involving a libel verdict based upon an anonymous internet message. In February 1999, Dr. Sam Graham, Jr., who had resigned as chairman of Georgia's Emory University School of Medicine urology department in July 1998, read an anonymous posting on a Yahoo message board that claimed he had resigned after receiving kickbacks from a urology company.

The anonymous source was later determined to be a staff doctor at a competing laboratory. A U.S. district court judge awarded Dr. Graham \$675,000 in damages.

NYSE to Suspend Trading of Reliance Securities

NEW YORK, NY-The New York Stock Exchange announced Dec. 5 that it would suspend trading in the NYSE-listed securities of insurance group Reliance Group Holdings, Inc. The NYSE said it will also seek to "delist" the issues from the exchange.

The NYSE said that the action is based on the low price of the company's common stock (which matched a 52-week low), and violation of listing criteria.

Until recently, Chiropractic Benefit Services (CBS) sold malpractice policies through Reliance, whose parent company is Reliance Group Holdings, Inc. (See "Bankruptcy Looms" for Reliance/CBS: CBS Malpractice Insureds Exposed" in the November 30, 2000 issue or at www.chiroweb.com/dynamic/temp/bankruptcy.html.)

Chiropractic Kickback Scheme Illegal, Says CMA

On November 9, 2000, the California Medical Association announced that it considers internet marketing plans in which chiropractors refer patients to a website and receive 20 percent of the price of products the patients purchase on that site as "patently illegal."

The CMA's position was published as "Assessing Those Opportunities Internet Companies Offer" in its fall 2000 issue of California Physician. The CMA has also developed a 33-page document, Self-Referral Prohibitions: California and Federal, which details the Physician Ownership and Referral Act (PORA), the California law that prohibits self-referrals. The law's federal counterpart is known as Stark II.

Better Access to Complementary Care

Dr. James Gordon, chairman of the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy, stated at a December 5 press conference in Washington, D.C., that the commission plans to recommend to Congress in its interim report on July 2001 that CAM therapies become more integrated in mainstream health care.

Northwestern Names First Clinical Science Resident

Stacy Thornhill, DC, is the first clinical science resident at Northwestern Health Sciences University (NHSU). A 1998 graduate of National Chiropractic College, Dr. Thornhill will focus on teaching methods, but she will also be involved in clinical practice at Northwestern's Bloomington Clinic.

Dr. William Elkington, dean of clinical sciences at NHSU, touted the residency as critical to improving chiropractic instruction, and a "superior way to groom first-rate teachers and clinicians."

Less than half of the chiropractic colleges offer a clinical science residency program.

California Doctors Honored

SACRAMENTO, CA-The California Chiropractic Association presented its "Best of Chiropractic" awards recently: The recipients were:

Doctor of the Year: Peter Spencer, DC (Sacramento)

Outstanding New Doctor of the Year: Tara Walsh, DC (Pleasanton)

Dr. Robert Botterman Award: David Bunganich, DC (Chico)

Distinguished Service: Margaret Heller, DC (Kentfield)

Lifetime Achievement: John David Hemauer, DC (Whitter)

Student of the Year: Donna Woo (Southern California University of Health Sciences)

Thomas Truax Award: Janis Stoner, DC (Hillsborough)

ACA Endorses Breakthrough Coaching

ARLINGTON, VA-Because doctors frequently seek recommendations from the American Chiropractic Association on what practice management company to use, the ACA has announced the endorsement of Breakthrough Coaching, LLC, of Vernon, New Jersey. This is only the second endorsement of a practice management firm by the ACA in recent years.

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