

## Rhode Island House Rejects Chiropractic Acupuncture Proposal

Editorial Staff

The International Chiropractors Association (ICA) reports that its lobbying efforts, and those of the acupuncture community and public interest groups, have helped defeat a proposal that would have facilitated chiropractors practicing acupuncture in Rhode Island.

Specifically, the *ICA News Brief* states:

"Thanks to the aggressive lobbying by the ICA and its allies, the Health Committee of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, at its session of March 22, resoundingly rejected a proposal that would have expanded the chiropractic scope of practice in that state to include acupuncture. This proposal would have allowed DCs to take a minimal amount of education and qualify under their chiropractic license to perform this procedure. The ICA teamed up with the acupuncture community and public interest groups to prevent the back-door addition of this authority to the scope of chiropractic practice because clear pathways to acupuncture licensure have already been provided for in Rhode Island state law."

The Rhode Island proposal was defeated by an 11-0 vote.

James Winterstein, DC, DACBR, president of the National University of Health Sciences, noted that this was a "legislative effort by the Rhode Island Department of Health (DOH) to give its director, Patricia Nolan, MD, MPH, the authority to establish rules and regulations by the Rhode Island Board of Chiropractic Medicine for the practice of acupuncture by chiropractic physicians within the scope of their licenses."<sup>1</sup>

The impetus for the DOH's effort, Dr. Winterstein said, was the result of a meeting of officers of the Chiropractic Society of Rhode Island with Dr. Nolan and her executive staff. Dr. Winterstein explained that the proposal was drafted by Ms. Nolan and the legal staff, and "would have placed the Rhode Island chiropractic physicians at parity with the MDs and DOs." Dr. Winterstein added: "This was an initiative by the leading chiropractic organization in the state of Rhode Island, and the ICA chose to interfere with the hard work, the desires and the intentions of its chiropractors in a state legislative effort."

The ICA strongly believes that acupuncture is not a part of chiropractic practice, and thus a practitioner, chiropractic or otherwise, must have thorough and proper training.

Approximately 10 percent of chiropractic clinicians perform acupuncture, and 66 percent perform acupuncture or meridian therapy.<sup>2</sup>

ICA Assembly Representative Dr. Chris Black was pleased with the vote. "(This) represents a growing understanding on the part of state legislators of the separate and distinct nature of chiropractic science and practice." Dr. Black added: "This is also a signal to those who are looking to find short cuts to add nonchiropractic procedures to the scope of chiropractic practice in this

state that such proposals will be defeated."

### *References*

1. DCs who perform acupuncture - Turf war, or question of training? Point-Counterpoint: John Amaro and David Molony. *Dynamic Chiropractic* May 21, 2001:19(11).
2. Christensen M, et al. *Job Analysis of Chiropractic*, National Board of Chiropractic Examiners, Jan. 2000. Table 10.12 Passive Adjunctive Care: Frequency of Use, p 130.

JUNE 2001