

Unity in Diversity - Chiropractic Leaders Continue the Quest

Janet Jordan

Over two days in early May, the leadership of the national chiropractic organizations met in St. Louis for the second "Summit on Leadership." Convened by the Congress of Chiropractic State Associations (COCSA), the forum included representation of the profession's political, academic, research, and business communities.

"Attendance at this year's meeting represents some of the brightest and most divergent minds in this profession," observed Dr. Mario Spoto of Pennsylvania, project chairman and past COCSA president. "The dynamics of bringing this diverse group of leaders together was overwhelming and certainly gave us cause for concern, but the results were worth every obstacle we were forced to overcome. The success of this meeting should give us all continued hope that the chiropractic leaders can work together for the common good of the profession."

Participating organizations and their representatives included:

Association of Chiropractic Colleges

Dr. William Dallas
Dr. Carl Cleveland, III
David O'Bryon, CAE

American Chiropractic Association

Dr. Daryl Wills
Dr. James Edwards

Congress of Chiropractic State Associations

Janet Jordan
Dr. Mario Spoto
Dr. C. Kevin Donovan

Council on Chiropractic Guidelines and Practice Parameters

Dr. Leonard Suiter
Dr. George McClelland

Federation of Straight Chiropractors and Organizations

Dr. Richard Plummer

Dr. Gary Horwin

Foundation on Chiropractic Education and Research

DeAnna Beck
Dr. Anthony Rosner

International Chiropractors Association

Dr. Thomas Klapp
Dr. Elliot Foster

National Board of Chiropractic Examiners

Dr. Peter Ferguson
Horace Elliott

World Chiropractic Alliance

Dr. Matthew McCoy
Dr. Terry Rondberg

Also present:

Don Petersen Jr., publisher/editor, Dynamic Chiropractic
Richard Flaherty, Leader/Leander Health Technologies
D. Henry Leavitt, ChiroCode Institute

Meeting facilitators: Mary Rowe of Canada, assisted by Dr. Ashley Cleveland.

The group's primary focus was on finding ways for all chiropractic organizations to work more closely together. Based on the results of the first summit in April 2000, the three areas where it was determined that these efforts are most needed were in:

- fostering unity within the profession;
- raising the public's awareness and utilization of chiropractic; and
- significantly augmenting the amount of chiropractic-related research being conducted, and securing the funds necessary to do so.

Subgroups for each of these areas were formed and charged with identifying specific, achievable and measurable goals; identifying internal strengths and external opportunities upon which the profession can capitalize to achieve these goals; analyzing chiropractic's internal weaknesses and external obstacles that will affect the realization of these goals; and developing a strategy built on

the assets of the profession and addressing the challenges.

In addition to subgroup workshops, the weekend included opportunities for the full group to receive subgroup reports, to provide input, and to openly discuss concerns facing the profession as a whole. Although these discussions were often spirited and blunt, they produced the following consensus regarding this effort:

- We should bring the profession's internal conflicts into this open forum for resolution, but not air them in public.
- We must adopt principled behavior and set an example to our members and DCs in the field.
- We should not be afraid to openly discuss in this forum our differences or what we have in common.
- The quest for unity does not require sacrificing institutional autonomy.
- We can respect and even value the breadth of chiropractic, and communicate it as a market/patient advantage.

To ensure a strong working foundation, the group agreed to a more formal organizational structure for these meetings and accepted the ACC Paradigm as its founding principle. The new entity will continue to hold annual meetings convened by the COCSA, and will become known as the National Chiropractic Leadership Forum (NCLF). In addition to an organizational structure, the NCLF adopted a code of conduct, conflict resolution protocols, a "report card" system (to insure organizational follow-through), a revised original vision statement, and a declaration of chiropractic responsibilities.

Specific actions and projects suggested by the working groups and approved as part of the final strategic plan include:

- redistributing the ACC Paradigm to each organization's members;
- convening a task force to address terminology and definitions;
- supporting a chiropractic postage stamp, Boy Scout merit badge, and House Concurrent Resolution 46;
- establishing a library program;
- establishing an inventory of current research analyzing the gaps; and
- reaching an annual investment of new money totaling \$2.5 million for chiropractic research.

Members of the 2001 NCLF Summit agreed to take the results of this meeting to their respective boards for endorsement. Subgroups will continue to work on the goals and objectives identified at the meeting and will provide update reports at the next NCLF meeting, which will be held in conjunction with the COCSA convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico on November 8-10. The next summit will be held in the spring of 2002. Those wishing to support the initiatives set in motion at this meeting, or who want to keep tabs on these ongoing efforts, may do so by visiting the COCSA website (www.cocsa.org). Additionally, future articles will feature details and progress reports of each workgroup's goals and activities.

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