

## First Chiropractic Program in Spanish within a University System

UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL DEL VALLE DE ECATEPEC, MEXICO CITY

I want to begin this message with an expression of solidarity to all our colleagues and friends that live in the U.S. to the tragic events that happened in your great country. This is a situation that cannot be adequately described, and has put the world in shock. Here in Mexico there is great indignation. The U.S. is like a brother to us, and we have many close friends and relatives in the vicinity of the attacks, including people in the Mexican Embassy and those working right in Manhattan.

Please know that in the chiropractic world here in Mexico the Colegio de Profesionistas Científico-Quiroprácticos de México, A.C., like the Federación Mexicana de Quiropráctica Deportiva, A.C., sends you our support in these moments, knowing that your great country and people will move forward in spite of these crazy events that have no possible explanation. I know of wars. My parents had to leave Barcelona because of a terrible war, never to see their parents and brothers (in the case of my father).

I want to inform you that on Monday September 3, we introduced chiropractic education in Mexico at the Universidad Estatal del Valle de Ecatepec (UEVE). It was a truly special moment, with the 85 students of the first class and all the professors present. There was an official inauguration done by the Undersecretary of Superior Education Mr. Agustin Gasca-Pliego, governor of the Estado de México (state of Mexico), Mr. Arturo Montiel-Rojas, and Dr. Ismael-Saenz-Villa, first rector of the university.

UEVE begins with two career programs in chiropractic and acupuncture. The chiropractic program is an official program of the Ministry of Education of the State of Mexico. On November 22, 2000, there was an agreement signed between the Secretary of Education of the State of Mexico, Mr. Tomas Ruíz, and the Colegio de Profesionistas Científico-Quiroprácticos de México, A.C., represented by myself. Also present were Arlette López Trujillo, MS, the undersecretary of education; dignitaries of the State of Mexico; and the board of the Colegio: Dr. Octavio Terrazas-Ríos, vice president; Dr. Konrad Sproll, treasurer; Dr. Guillermo Nieto, secretary; Ms. Patricia Gregg de Benet, technical secretary; Dr. Concepción Quiroga, Dr. Montserrat Benet-Gregg, secretary of the Federación Mexicana de Quiropráctica Deportiva, A.C.; and the very special presence of Dr. John Allenburg, president of Northwestern Health Sciences University and Mr. Jim McDonald, vice president of the same institution.

The chiropractic program consists of 12 trimesters and 5,900 hours, more hours than chiropractic programs in the U.S. (The acupuncture program also is a 12-trimester program.) This was done to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education of Mexico. We used as our basis the program at Northwestern Health Sciences University, and added two more trimesters to incorporate sports chiropractic and expand the areas of nutrition and imaging.

The students can enter the chiropractic program after they have finished their *bachillerato*, which is equivalent to two years of college. The students will come out with the equivalent of a DC

degree, which in Mexico is called *licenciatura*. *Licenciaturas* are given to those in the fields of medicine, dentistry and law.

The program will include a large clinic, programs of social service, cooperation with the other health sciences, and research. The students will have to write a thesis for graduation, with their own project of investigation.

The Universidad Estatal del Valle de Ecatepec is a public university in a neighborhood of working-class people, so we know that we are on the right track for giving chiropractic to Mexico. The university is located in the suburbs of Ecatepec, which is in the northeast part of Mexico City, 15 minutes away from the international airport, and 20 minutes from my office. Ecatepec and the adjoining suburbs are home to 4.5 million inhabitants. The state of Mexico has close to 14 million people, and surrounds the federal district, an area populated by eight million people. This is the most densely populated zone of the country.

Right now we are using the facilities of the Technological Institute of Superior Education of Ecatepec, which is right next to our campus, which will consist of 30 acres. The cornerstone will be laid in October 2001, with the building for chiropractic and acupuncture. There are plans to add more career programs.

It has been a long road to accomplish this program, and was one of the main objectives when we founded the Sociedad Científico-Quiropráctica de México, A.C., in 1984, the Colegio in 1988, and the Federación Mexicana de Quiropráctica Deportiva, A.C., in 1988.

The road has not been an easy one to travel, since we wanted an officially recognized program within a university. We were offered lesser program options a number of times, and were strongly criticized by some within chiropractic for not accepting a two-year chiropractic program. I was told directly that I was trying to stop the growth of chiropractic in Mexico. We never accepted a lesser program because we knew it would downgrade the profession.

One of the reasons that we were able to start this program is that in 1973 I started giving free care to the children of the Institute of Protection to the Infancy of Naucalpan de Juárez (another municipality of the state of Mexico). The current governor of the state, Mr. Arturo Montiel-Rojas, was then the interim mayor, taking over for another very good friend and patient, Mr. Juan Monroy (may he rest in peace). These officials knew of the wonders of chiropractic through the more than 500 children that I attended to during their three years in power.

This program continued with the support of several of the members of the Colegio. When Mr. Montiel became the governor of the Estado de México (1999-2005), I proposed to him the possibility of starting the chiropractic program. With the support of other people in the government who knew of the possibilities of chiropractic, like Mr. Hector Luna de la Vega and his wife, the conversations began.

This whole situation would not have happened without the cooperation of the members of the Colegio, the Sports Federación, and Patricia Gregg de Benet, the technical secretary, since it was through conversations with Ms. Tere Luna de la Vega, and Ms. Elba Monroy that they convinced the governor and the secretary of education that this was a feasible project.

I want to name the first professors in the chiropractic subjects to teach this first generation of students. They had to pass the rigorous National Exam of General and Specific Knowledge for Health Science Careers given by the National Council of Evaluation of the Federal Ministry of Education.

The basic sciences courses are taught by professors from the National Autonomous University, and the Polytechnical Institute, who are specialists in anatomy, biochemistry, histology, etc.

The professors teaching chiropractic are:

Dr. Montserrat Benet-Gregg - spinal column and pelvis;  
Dr. Octavio Terrazas-Ríos - spinal column and pelvis (there are two classrooms);  
Dr. Francisco Díez-Gurtubay (academic director) - skeletal radiology;  
Dr. Moises Hernandez - peripheral nervous system (beginning in the second trimester, January 2002);  
Dr. Gebgard Sproll - chiropractic methods;  
Dr. Alberto Metta - chiropractic principles;  
Dr. Guillermo Nieto - chiropractic methods;  
Ms. Patricia Benet - administration and general coordination.

Professors Dr. Everardo Ramírez and Dr. Adriana Barraza are also on staff.

These names will be on a very special plaque on the campus of the university and in the history of chiropractic in Mexico.

I mentioned we are using as a base the program of the Northwestern Health Sciences University. We have no words to express our gratitude for the great support of this institution and its leaders: Dr. Allenburg, Jim McDonald, and Dr. Chuck Sawyer, vice president of academic affairs.

We also want to show our appreciation to the Spanish Association of Chiropractic and Dr. Antolin Silva for sending us 100 books on chiropractic in Spanish. In addition to this, we recently had Dr. Manes Cox, giving us Part I Certification on Flexion-Distraction and he addressed the student body (85 persons). He is the first guest speaker in our program.

This program is the first chiropractic program in Spanish within a university system. The efforts and sacrifices were great, and we are justifiably proud.

For the Colegio de Profesionistas Científico-Quiroprácticos de México, A.C., and of the Federación Mexicana de Quiropráctica Deportiva, A.C., this is a major moment in our lives, in the history of chiropractic in Mexico and the Spanish speaking world, and I believe in the history of chiropractic. You can be proud of what we have done, and be at peace that here in Mexico, the Colegio is upholding the highest possible standards.

We want to keep a close association with other chiropractic colleges and with all the major chiropractic institutions, such as the World Federation of Chiropractic and the Fédération Internationale de Chiropratique du Sport, which we have been members of since their foundations, and have been very supportive of our efforts.

My colleagues and my family (Patricia, Montserrta, Enrique, my grandchildren and my parents, wherever they are) have been my guide to start this program, and to help the suffering people of Mexico.

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