

## NY Chiropractic Council "Moving Heaven and Earth"

Doctors of chiropractic have responded to the tragedy of the attack on the World Trade Centers in New York by supplying their hands and expertise to the rescue and relief workers at "ground zero," the site of the attack on the U.S. of September 11. The recovery operation, which Mayor Guilliani predicted would take a year, is a scene of legions of workers toiling around the clock.

According to Barbara Contessa, an executive assistant for the New York Chiropractic Council (NYCC), access to the workers is greatly the result of the work of its board chairperson, Ellen Coyne, DC.

"She has moved heaven and Earth for us to be able to help the workers at the site," said Ms. Contessa.

Since publishing volunteer information on its site ([www.nycouncil.org](http://www.nycouncil.org)), the NYCC has been inundated with calls from chiropractors from around the world donating their time and services.

Dr. Coyne, a 1984 New York Chiropractic College graduate, worked tirelessly to obtain permits for four treatment sites and a central office in Manhattan, coordinating a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week schedule for the DC volunteers.

"There are two official Red Cross sites where we have shifts of two volunteer DCs every six hours," explained Dr. Coyne. The sites are but two of many such locations, which have included the Jacob Javits Center, the ship *The Spirit of Liberty*, a local Marriott hotel, and St. Paul's Chapel. A roster of those volunteering at council-coordinated locations is available at the council's website.

Dr. Coyne acknowledged that getting the volunteer DCs recognized by the American Red Cross requires a good deal of coordination from all involved. "The logistics of our situation is that people have to go to the Red Cross center and obtain a 'ground zero pass,' which is good for two weeks. At the end of the period, each volunteer must be recertified. Volunteers must each have a photo ID and a valid drivers' license, prior to receiving the high-security pass."

Dr. Coyne expects DCs could be working nonstop at the site for a year, if necessary, but that they would be available "as long as there are workers down there, be it a couple of months, or several."

One of the volunteers, Robert Shortell, DC, of Cromwell, Connecticut, credits Dr. Coyne for coordinating the respite centers and enabling him and 70 others from his state to help.

"These guys, the workers and my fellow DCs, are working in 12-hour shifts. I'd say half of the volunteers are police and fire workers, many with military backgrounds, presenting with everything from upper, lower back problems, disc complications and strain - the worst being from construction workers, having to use heavy equipment for hours on end. Some of these guys are in incredible pain, but they stay committed at the risk of their own health."

Many of the more strenuous jobs were being done by the hundreds employed to stand for 12 hours

or more at a time. "It's amazing how many people are there to guard the workers," observed Dr. Shortell. There are rows of barricades and police, army personnel, National Guardsmen - all working just as hard as those with burdens."

Dr. Shortell, as with all the others volunteering, was overwhelmed by the "tremendous honor" of being able to help. "You couldn't be more suited to help these people than as a chiropractor," he noted.

"We were at St. Paul's Cathedral, the oldest in New York, where Washington once prayed. It was untouched by the attack. There were several stations providing massage, podiatric treatments, and supplies including fresh boots, toiletries and food - and it was surprisingly organized!" related Dr. Shortell.

"One of the positive things about this experience is seeing those who discover the healing power of chiropractic for the first time," Dr. Coyne observed. "Chiropractic care was in such demand that on one day the fire marshal shut one site down due to it attracting too much attention." Most of the DCs working on the site were so preoccupied by their work that they failed to notice the throngs of New Yorkers curious about chiropractic.

"I heard the plane coming," said Dr. Glenn Scarpelli, referring to the terrorist attack. His practice is mere blocks from ground zero. "I even joked about it flying so low, which is unusual activity considering our skyline. Before I knew it, someone came running into our building with news of the attack." He and other volunteers began helping others as soon as was humanely possible.

"Guys on the bucket brigade came in and were able to back out and put in several more hours after we worked on them," explained Dr. Scarpelli. He said that treating the workers brought an "intense feeling of satisfaction," though it was sobering to watch remains hauled from the American Express building, used as a temporary morgue across the street.

"You remember your first adjustment, don't you?" asked Dr. Scarpelli. "Do you remember how 'miraculous' it seemed? Well, imagine how most of these 80 percent or so that have never had our type of treatment felt. Many came in regularly after working. Many of these big, burly guys were hesitant to see us without being 'hurt,' until they saw the results and heard the praise of their buddies."

The NYCC website has posted testimony from some of the DC volunteers at ground zero. In one such excerpt, Dr. Frank Coppola reported:

"One young man remains in my mind coming in covered in white dust looking exhausted and shocked from working in 'the pile' all day long. In a way that brought a tear to my eye. He said to me, 'You really don't know how much we appreciate you guys being here.' They want us, they need us, they appreciate us."

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