

Arizona Passes HMO Reform

LANDMARK LEGISLATION INCLUDES MINIMUM 12 ADJUSTMENTS WITHOUT GATEKEEPER INVOLVEMENT

Editorial Staff

Arizona legislators have passed an HMO reform law that stipulates that doctors of chiropractic can, at a minimum, treat patients for 12 office visits without the interference of a gatekeeper. The bill's language also allows patients to sue their HMOs.

The bill's chief architect was Representative Barbara Leff (R-24th district). Rep. Leff asked Arlan Fuhr, DC, to become a member of the legislative task force when they started drafting the legislation during the summer of 1999.

"It was the first time chiropractic had a place at the table, said Dr. Fuhr." "If it had not been for Rep. Leff, chiropractic patients would not have the access that they will have starting January 1, 2001."

Rep. Leff successfully formed a coalition that included the HMOs, chiropractic, the Arizona Medical Association, the business community, and the trial attorneys.

The passage of this bill is the culmination of a seven-year effort. Thanks go to the Arizona Association of Chiropractic's public policy committee: DCs Shanlyn Newman; Arlan Fuhr; David Berg; John Casalino; Troy Freiheit; Kevin Gilbertson; Robert Iversen; Pat Kadrmas; David Morrison; and Kurt von Rice. Dr. Fuhr said, "When chiropractic became a part of a greater cause, we ended up with a bill that was workable for everyone."

State chiropractic associations that would like to receive more information or a copy of the specific chiropractic legislation can contact Pam Koester, executive director of the Arizona Association of Chiropractic at 602-246-0664, or via e-mail at pamkoester@azchiropractic.org.

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