

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions: "Civic Journalism" in the Chiropractic Profession

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As the amount of activity in the chiropractic profession increases, so does the amount of news and information. This publication, like every other, faces the challenge of deciding what news and information to present. These decisions are a function of space restriction, staff, time and other finite resources.

The advent of web publishing has eliminated the space restraints, but it increases the demands on staff and resources. If you've ever paid attention to the box on the right side of this page, you're aware that the number of people involved in *Dynamic Chiropractic* has been steadily increasing since we launched ChiroWeb.com. In essence, no matter what the medium, the publishing decisions remain.

So, what are the deciding factors in publishing news and articles? Is there a particular policy or rating scale that allows certain articles to be published while others are held back?

Our decisions are based in part on the concept of "civic journalism," which suggests that one of the primary obligations of journalism is to enhance the community it serves, in our case, the chiropractic profession. The Pew Center for Civic Journalism makes this statement:

Civic journalism is both a philosophy and a set of values supported by some evolving techniques to reflect both of those in your journalism. At its heart is a belief that journalism has an obligation to public life - an obligation that goes beyond just telling the news or unloading lots of facts. The way we do our journalism affects the way public life goes. Journalism can help empower a community or it can help disable it.

Looking at this concept as it relates to chiropractic, it can be seen as a mission statement. It directs *Dynamic Chiropractic* to look for ways to encourage excellence and change within the chiropractic profession. It reminds us to always listen to the words of individual doctors of chiropractic on the issues most affecting the profession, and to strive to better understand how the profession can improve.

Translating "civic journalism" into "chiropractic civic journalism" obligates us to report on issues that affect the profession, regardless of who may be embarrassed. At times it may mean amplifying the almost unheard (and unheeded) voices of DCs around the world. At other times, it may mean giving a smaller platform to those who have traditionally enjoyed a great deal of media exposure. Occasionally, this results in the loss of an advertiser. This is particularly true when it involves events where DCs are being abused or taken advantage of. Fortunately, such events are generally rare.

Chiropractic civic journalism involves listening for trends and being open to the possibilities inherent in change. It requires understanding the events of today as the result of numerous historical chiropractic events and to look back at today through the eyes of tomorrow's doctors of

chiropractic.

Chiropractic civic journalism is the process of asking "Why can't this be better?" in the face of situations that are thought to be "OK." It sometimes involves making readers just a little uncomfortable and, at times, making a few people mad.

Which is the better article, the one with which you agree, or the one that causes you to stop, think and question the status quo or why you believe what you believe?

Are you happier with things the way they are, or are you willing to take the risk for what could be?

Being an agent for positive change in a healing profession filled with passionate providers and patients is extremely challenging. There is risk in reaching for something better. But if we stay grounded in our chiropractic heritage and courageous in our pursuit of excellence, we will endure change and perhaps even recognize it as opportunity.

This is the goal of chiropractic civic journalism.

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