

## First Chiropractor Appointed to American Public Health Association's Executive Board

Editorial Staff

PORTLAND, Oregon - For the first time in the more than 125 year of the American Public Health Association (APHA), a chiropractor is serving on its executive board. APHA is the oldest and largest organization of public health professionals in the world, representing more than 50,000 members from over 50 health professions.

Mitch Haas, MA, DC, professor and interim director of research at Western States Chiropractic College, has a long-held interest in public health issues. He is one of the founding members in 1995 of the Chiropractic Health Care Section within APHA. The 24 sections are the basic organizational unit of APHA's membership and are organized by health discipline.

After serving two terms as the chairman of the APHA's chiropractic health care section and two terms on the governing council, Dr. Haas was elected chairman of the intersectional council. Prior to his election, no chiropractor had served in an APHA-wide leadership position. A recent change in the APHA's constitution and bylaws now designates the chair of the intersectional council to serve as a member of the executive board. As intersectional chair, Dr. Haas now assumes an even greater APHA leadership role. It's a step that Dr. Haas finds promising for the public health arena.

"As advocates for disease prevention and health promotion, the chiropractic profession is a natural partner in the public health effort. As the third-largest health profession in the country, we address public health issues in our practices every day. It's important that chiropractors play a major role in this critically important mission," explains Dr. Haas.

Dr. Haas and other members of the APHA Chiropractic Health Section believe that one of the most effective ways to establish a stronger public health presence is by increasing chiropractic membership in the organization. Rand Baird, DC, a APHA member since 1975, who has served as section chairman and member of the governing council, recommends every chiropractor take the step. "Boosting chiropractic representation in the American Public Health Association is critical to having more political influence. It also enhances chiropractic communication and credibility, and demonstrates chiropractic commitment to improving the health of all people."

Several key achievements mark chiropractic's meteoric rise within APHA. Beginning in 1983 with a new official APHA policy recognizing modern chiropractic as safe and effective for neuromusculoskeletal conditions and low back disorders, through the 1995 establishment of the Chiropractic Health Care section, doctors of chiropractic have progressed to full equity and parity with the other APHA health professionals.

Chiropractors are now serving in APHA's structure at all levels as officers, committee chairs, program presenters, scientific journal authors, award winners, council members and board members. According to Dr. Baird, "APHA is an important vehicle for chiropractic participation and integration into mainstream public health activities. With Dr. Mitchell Haas' election as the first DC ever to chair the important intersectional council and also serve as a member of the APHA executive board, the chiropractic profession can be truly proud of its role in promoting and

protecting the health of the people."

Dr. Haas, meanwhile, is in the middle of a three-year federal study to assess both chiropractic and medical treatment for acute and chronic low back pain. The research is funded by a one-million dollar award from the Health Resources and Services Administration.

To learn more about the American Public Health Association or for membership information, please call 202-777-2742 or check the website at <http://www.apha.org>.

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