

# Life's Little Adjustments - Government Commission, Testimonials ... "Vital" Research

Steve Kelly, managing editor

In the last several decades of the 20th century, a light clicked on in the heads of many people. That bright idea was that when it came to health problems, one didn't necessarily "have to go" to an MD. What a revelation; what a resolution; what a revolution. In the 1980s, I vividly recall a tennis-playing friend bemoaning that the doctor (an MD, of course) had "treated" his back pain with a pain prescription, told him to lie down for several days, and handed him a bill for \$100.

My friend, and millions like him, began exploring other possibilities. By the 1990s, surveys began to tabulate the huge shift toward "alternative care." This caught the government's attention (usually a frightening thought). In 1992, the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) was established within the National Institutes of Health. That alternative care had gained government sanction in any small way (the budget was miniscule) rankled many in the medical community. In 1998, Congress upgraded the OAM to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM - <http://nccam.nih.gov/>). "Centers" have greater status than "offices" within the Department of Health and Human Services and receive more money. The NCCAM comprises 17 appointees, including two chiropractors: William Meeker, DC, MPH, and Dana Lawrence, DC.

Now comes the July 13 announcement from President Clinton on the first appointments to the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy. This commission was established by the same appropriations bill that created the NCCAM. If you go by the best survey numbers on patient visits to alternative care providers in the U.S.,<sup>1</sup> the panel would be comprised (in order of most usage): chiropractors, massage therapists, and "relaxation" therapists.

However, in the government's wisdom that sometimes escapes us all, the 13 appointments did not include a single DC. The concession to chiropractic, apparently, was to appoint George DeVries, III, president of the American Specialty Health Plans (ASHP), the largest chiropractic HMO in the U.S. However, ASHP's management decisions are not making many fans among its 10,000 chiropractic providers. (See Don Petersen's "Report of Findings" in the Aug. 6 issue and "ASHP Drops Reimbursement to \$30 Global Fee - 1999 Withholds Will Not be Returned" in the same issue, on line respectively at <http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/18/17/18.html> and <http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/18/17/02.html>).

I'm certain that the commission chairman, Harvard-educated James Gordon, MD, is an outstanding psychiatrist, but he doesn't seem to be the most logical choice to chair a commission on alternative care. We hear through the grapevine that a DC will be appointed to the commission. Stay tuned.

In Case You Missed It - Chiropractic Testimonials on National TV

Over the weekend I was watching some of the U.S. Olympic track and field trials taking place in Sacramento. NBC was broadcasting the event and was hyping the match-up of the top two U.S. female 1,500-meter runners - Regina Jacobs and Suzy Favor Hamilton. The press and NBC were playing up the rivalry and the supposed dislike the two competitors have for one another. Jacobs,

36, is black. Her mother, divorced, raised her in L.A. and worked two jobs to send her to a private high school in Hollywood. Regina graduated from Stanford University and did postgraduate studies at Cal Berkeley. Hamilton, 31, is white, blond and from Wisconsin. Her good looks have garnered her more attention from sponsors and the media. She's the Anna Kournikova of long-distance running, but wins more. Jacob's family nickname is "Bullet"; Hamilton has been dubbed the "Blond Blur."

It wasn't a question if the two women would make the Olympic team, but which would win the trials. Track and field insiders aver that one of the two women has a real shot at being the first U.S. woman to win the Olympic 1,500 meters. Jacobs won the race. When the microphone was thrust in her face immediately following the race, still gasping for air but jubilant, Regina *immediately* thanked her chiropractor. She avowed that she would not have been able to compete without the chiropractic care.

In a related statement, CNN's *Sports Illustrated* website featured the daily diary of Debbie Ferguson, a silver medallist for the Bahamas' 400-meter relay team at the 1996 Olympics. Debbie, like Olympic hopefuls from around the world, is preparing to compete in Olympic trials for her country. In her diary of July 16, she thanked her chiropractor, Dr. Natalia Kogan of Norcross, Georgia, in the first paragraph: "I was plagued with back problems and groin problems for the past three years," Debbie wrote. "I met Dr. Kogan just about eight weeks ago, and since then my life and career have changed. From headaches, backaches, insomnia, stress and the list goes on. She has helped and continues to help eliminate the problems."

How is that for major media chiropractic endorsements? world-class athletes have long praised the work you do. Thinking back on athletic testimonials to chiropractic in DC, a few names come to mind:

Joe Montana, Jerry Rice, Roger Craig and other members of the San Francisco 49ers NFL championship team of the early 1990s; players from the Atlanta Falcons; St. Louis Rams (Dr. Ralph Filson); golfing greats Tiger Woods, Chi Chi Rodriguez, and Paul Azinger; heavyweight boxing champion Evander Holyfield; world champion kick boxer Dennis Elezio; Charles Barkley; Karl Malone, John Stockton, and other members of the Utah Jazz; NBA veteran forward Kiki Vandeweghe; the work of DCs Tim Brown, G. Douglas Andersen, Gary Andersen and Scott Blatt with the Association of Volleyball Professionals; Karch Kiraly and Kent Steffes (Olympic golf medallists, beach volleyball); Lance Armstrong, Tour de France champion and his teammates (Dr. Jeffrey Spencer); baseball's Barry Bonds and Wade Boggs; touring pros of the Association of Tennis Professionals' Dan O'Brien, Olympic gold medallist, decathlon; Donovan Bailey, 100-meter sprint champion, and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

In this issue (see "Chiropractic at the NCAA Track & Field Championships") we see yet again chiropractors helping athletes maximize their potentials. While there aren't enough world-class athletes to keep chiropractors busy, there are millions of weekend warriors that need your help. (Not to be discriminatory, those people whose idea of exercise is lifting food to their mouths and pushing buttons on the remote control also need your help.)

#### Parting Shots - "Vital" Medical Research

For years we've heard the refrain about chiropractic lacking the scientific validation that peer-reviewed research is purported to supply. The research community in chiropractic has taken positive steps to produce more research and funding (see the "RAC V" article on the front page).

We in DC editorial peruse most of the chiropractic-related research, thanks to Peter Crownfield,

associate editor of DC and the managing editor of the *Chiropractic Research Review* and *To Your Health*. A fair amount of medical research also crosses our desks. We are constantly amazed and often bemused at the barrage of what we've come to call "vital" medical research. Here are just a couple examples:

- F. Suarez, J. Springfield, J. Furne, and M. Levitt. Differentiation of mouth versus gut as site of origin of odoriferous breath gases after garlic ingestion *Am. J. Physiol. Gastrointest. Liver Physiol.* 1999 276: G425-G430.
- F. Suarez, J. Furne, J. Springfield, and M. Levitt. Production and elimination of sulfur-containing gases in the rat colon *Am. J. Physiol. Gastrointest. Liver Physiol.* 1998 274: G727-G733.

Chiropractic is a little more particular about the direction of its research. The latest from RAC V is that the funding for chiropractic research is there, and now is the window of opportunity. However, there is a lack of chiropractic researchers. Cheryl Hawk, DC, PhD, a member of the RAC planning committee and associate professor at the Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research, also notes that the profession needs "more grass-roots-level research from practitioners in the form of case reports and observational studies."

#### *Reference*

1. Eisenberg, D.M., Davis, R.B., Ettner, S.L., Appel, S., Wilkey, S., Van Rompay, M., Kessler, R.C. "Trends in Alternative Medicine Use in the United States, 1990-1997: Results of a Follow-Up National Survey." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. November 11, 1998. 280(18):1569-75.

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