

Good Questions to Ask Our Politicians

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One of the hottest issues being debated today among politicians, and especially our presidential candidates, is how our nation can best deal with our health care crisis. One of the most talked-about "solutions" is whether the government should subsidize prescription drugs. If I was asking the questions during the presidential debates, I'd have asked them if they realized that they were debating over financing the fourth biggest killer of American people after heart disease, cancer and stroke.

I'm not against the rational use of medicines, but medications are a double-edged sword that need judicious utilization. For example, it is well-established that abusive overutilization of antibiotics has created antibiotic-resistant bacteria. It's an extremely serious problem.

According to the American Medical Association, prescription drugs kill 106,000 people every year, which means more than 2,000 deaths every week. If chiropractors were responsible for even one percent of that number, we'd be tarred, feathered and relegated to driving cabs and selling life insurance. Chiropractic would cease to exist.

The real solution to our crisis should focus on making health care more therapeutically effective, cost efficient and user-friendly, and embracing the scientifically/clinically proven treatments that each competing profession has to offer. I'd have asked the presidential candidates if they knew anything about a U.S. government study, which used 200 leading experts reviewing tens of thousands of scientific literature, who selected only the finest scientifically acceptable studies and then concluded that spinal adjusting, of which 94 percent is done by chiropractors, was superior to any other treatment for low back pain.¹

And since cost is always a significant factor, I'd have asked the candidates if they'd heard of the Utah Workers' Compensation study in which the average cost of chiropractic care was \$68 dollars per patient, compared to \$668 per patient for identical low back ailments treated by MDs. And I'd ask them about the California and Oregon workers' compensation studies which gave chiropractic a 2-1 superiority advantage in both effectiveness and cost. I might throw in the Gallup poll conducted by the Western Medical Journal which found that patient satisfaction was three times higher for chiropractic care than for medical care.

I'd ask them if they realize that a major Canadian Government study conducted at the University of Ottawa concluded that chiropractic adjustments were therapeutically superior, scientifically based, should be used in hospitals, and could save the Canadian people millions of dollars a year.²

Were they aware of the highly respected, double-blinded and extensive 10-year British government study that concluded that chiropractic was found to be therapeutically superior over medicine within its realm, often by a 2-1 superiority, and that it was safe and cost effective?³

Had they ever heard of a university-based clinical study showing how chiropractic adjustments corrected 87 percent of a group of medically unresponsive low back ailments of seven years duration, which were closely observed and monitored by MDs and PhDs and conducted under strict

controlled conditions?⁴

Did they realize that there were 80,000 unnecessary disc surgeries being done every year, and that unnecessary surgeries cause 48,000 deaths a year?

As I sit at my computer and surf the web or read about all of our technical accomplishments, I never cease to be totally amazed at just how brilliant we are in the area of technology, but how incredibly stupid or uninformed we are when it comes to health care. The United States, Canada, Great Britain and New Zealand have all come out with glowing reports about how chiropractic spinal adjustments are therapeutically superior, safe and cost effective, yet we see medical "business as usual," with 98 percent of hospitals isolating chiropractic care from their facilities.

One of the so-called plans to "cure" the health care crisis was to try to socialize health care, which represents one-seventh of our gross national product. Socializing medicine would make about as much sense as putting a Band-Aid over a hemorrhage. We'd bankrupt the system.

Some of our past U.S. presidents and vice presidents have been chiropractic patients and recognize the merit of chiropractic for their own personal use, but haven't stepped forward to tell the rest of the world what they knew from their personal experiences:

- Hubert Humphrey had a car accident that left him with recurring low back pains. He told his chiropractor that if he didn't go on the road with him and give him regular spinal adjustments that he would not be able to endure the rigors of campaigning. His ability to campaign was dependent upon being able to get chiropractic adjustments.
- Ronald Reagan was a chiropractic patient and close friend of chiropractor Dr. B. J. Palmer when he worked as a sports announcer on Dr. Palmer's radio station.
- Harry Truman was a chiropractic patient.

Yet none of these leaders publicly stepped up to insist that chiropractic take its rightful place in the minds and hearts of the American people. Why?

I believe politicians have been intimidated from being critical of medical abuses, for the same reason that people usually don't challenge a great white shark in its own environment.

However, things have changed. Chiropractors understand this strange and intimidating language called "medical jargon," and have the opportunity to become champions for objective and honest interprofessional cooperation, and to become the "conscience" for rational health care. We need chiropractors ready to step forward and "tell it like it is," because we have truth and solid facts on our side. This gives us the advantage.

The first president who becomes familiar with the facts and steps forward and speaks out on the need for more intelligent utilization of all health care disciplines based on their individual merit, and specifically mentions chiropractic adjustments, will gain a legacy as a true reformer of health care in America. It will be one of that president's greatest accomplishments. Let's hope it will be our next president.

References

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