

Time to Wake Up, Listen Up and Take Action to Save Our Profession!

Michael Pedigo, DC

If the title of this message sounds alarming, it's meant to. Our profession has faced many challenges and has overcome incredible obstacles, and once again we face a huge battle that must be fought! We all get tired of hearing, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling." Unfortunately, we now face a challenge so important to the future of our profession that it demands the focus and help of the profession. It requires your help.

The fact is, if you don't help fight this battle you are putting your future and the future of the profession in jeopardy.

I am talking about HCFA changing Medicare administrative regulations so that insurance companies can offer chiropractic care without the chiropractor rendering the service. To put it another way, it allows for the elimination of the chiropractic profession in Medicare HMOs, and is likely to spread to the private sector if we don't stop this injustice.

Medicare is making a big push to get more Medicare patients into managed care programs. This started a few years ago under Medicare Part B, but it has been expanded under the new Medicare Part C.

Chiropractic care was included in Medicare in the 1970s under the limited scope of "spinal manipulation to correct a subluxation as seen on x-ray." When chiropractic was included under those terms it was clear that this was a special Medicare "carve out" for doctors of chiropractic. At that time in history, chiropractic was the only profession that did spinal manipulation to correct a subluxation.

What the Medicare bureaucrats did was to rewrite history. They did it by taking the chiropractor, a very special type of health care provider and making our services generic! We hear a lot of talk within the profession about how important it is for our profession to maintain its identity. Well, with the stroke of a pen HCFA just made our professional service generic!

The impact of this regulation will result in disaster for our profession if not stopped. It is not speculation. It is already happening. Blue Cross of Northern California has recently sent out a notice that beginning in 1999 it will no longer cover chiropractors in their managed care plans. (*Editor's note: See "Blue Cross Drops Chiropractic for Seniors in N. Calif." in the Feb. 22 DC.*)

They have just eliminated our profession from their Medicare HMO plans! Doctors, please understand this is an extremely serious challenge for our profession, and we need your help.

ACA wrote HCFA and asked if Blue Cross was allowed to do that. They wrote back and said yes, as long as someone is providing spinal manipulation to correct a subluxation.

I hope I have your attention! As other insurance companies adapt to same policy your patient base will decrease while at the same time we have an expanding number of DCs coming into the

profession.

Not only will this affect Medicare HMOs, but non-Medicare HMOs are likely to follow the same course of action, just as they frequently have followed Medicare's lead in the past.

This is such an important issue for the profession that ACA has filed a lawsuit against HCFA to correct this wrongdoing. The battle could take years and cost millions, but it must be fought and won. We did not have the luxury of waiting until we raised needed funds to fight this legal battle. ACA saw just how important this issue was to the profession and it took the only remaining option available to us to correct this wrongdoing.

We need your help! We need your help NOW and you need to help. Is your practice worth a \$1,000 to protect it? If so please write out a check today.

If you can't afford \$1,000 then make it out for what you can, and make a pledge to make monthly payments. Students should also give to this legal action. I understand students don't have a lot of money, they need to be a part of this fight, even if it's only \$10 to \$25.

Mail your check to: Legal Action Fund/HCFA Lawsuit P.O.Box 75359, Baltimore, MD 21275.
Thanks for your support and thanks for doing your part to protect your practice and the profession.
This is a true investment in your future.

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