

AMA Survey: Doctors "Deceive" Insurers to Enhance Patient Care

Editorial Staff

According to a survey from the American Medical Association, nearly 40% of physicians say they have exaggerated a patient's condition to a third-party payer to make sure the patient receives coverage for necessary treatment or extra time in the hospital.

Dr. Deborah Cummins and colleagues collected data from a 1998 survey, *"Meeting Patients' Needs in the Modern Era."* The survey sampled 724 physicians involved in patient care and asked how often they employed one of three "deceptive" strategies to obtain coverage or service for their patients.

"Deceptive" practices included: exaggerating the severity of a patient's condition to avoid early discharge from the hospital; changing a billing diagnosis to help secure services; and reporting nonexistent symptoms so that a patient would obtain needed coverage and treatments.

Overall, 39% of physicians surveyed said they had "sometimes," "often" or "very often" used one of the three forms of deception. Only 28% said that they had "never" used any of the forms of deception within the past year.

In her conclusion, Dr. Cummins noted the effect could have on physicians (and their patients) in the future. "While physicians' use of deception may benefit individual patients, using deception may also damage the patient-physician relationship, cause moral discomfort for physicians, subvert resource allocation systems, and risk prosecution for fraud."

New Dean of Clinics at Palmer

Shelly Simon, DC, MPH, EdD, a 1981 graduate of Western States Chiropractic College, has been appointed dean of clinics at Palmer College of Chiropractic. She will begin her official duties with the college in November.

Dr. Simon brings nearly two decades of experience in health care, patient education, communication and management styles to her new position. Her impressive academic history includes summa cum laude degrees in four disciplines: nursing, public health, chiropractic and educational leadership."

Dr. Simon has been in chiropractic practice for 19 years, the last 10 spent in her private practice in Portland, Oregon.

Previous to clinical practice, she was an assistant professor of clinical sciences at Western States and involved in accreditation.

In her new role, Dr. Simon will oversee the operations and planning for the Palmer Chiropractic Clinics, including the main clinic on campus, the Rock Island, Illinois clinic, and two community

outreach clinics in Davenport, Iowa and East Moline, Illinois.

ABCA Annual Convention

The American Black Chiropractic Association will hold its 18th annual national convention in Deerfield Beach, Florida from August 18-22. The association expects a turnout of between 200-250 chiropractors, students and chiropractic supporters.

For more information, please contact Gloria Niles, president of the ABCA at (800) 788-4476 ext. 303, or by e-mail at gniles@lifewest.edu.

JAC/RMIT to Hold Multidisciplinary Conference in Tokyo

The Japanese Association of Chiropractors and RMIT University-Japan have announced an international, multidisciplinary conference on the risks and benefits of spinal manipulation to be held in Tokyo on October 10-12.

The three-day conference is intended to help educate the public, the national government and the other major health professions in Japan about the safety and efficacy of spinal manipulation. Keynote speakers will include Dr. Alan Terrett of RMIT-Melbourne, Charlotte LeBoeuf-Yde of Odense University and Dr. Gert Brontford of Northwestern College of Chiropractic.

The symposium will be presented in English, with simultaneous translation into other languages. For more information, contact Dr. Brian Budgell at (011) 813-3437-6907 or by e-mail at budgell@center.tmig.or.jp.

JULY 1999