

## Chiropractic Missing Again

OH WHERE OH WHERE HAVE WE GONE?

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There is renewed concern from many parents and some health care providers over the number and severity of adverse reactions in infants and children to some vaccines. The devastating effects of adverse reactions in previously healthy infants or children are tragic beyond words.

The headlines are shouting:

"Parents Fear Growing Numbers of Vaccines"<sup>1</sup>

"Doctors Call for Immediate Stop to Mandatory Vaccines"

One article noted that most of the 11,000 children born each day in the U.S. "will get at least 21 vaccinations before they start first grade,"<sup>1</sup> about twice the number of vaccinations as a decade ago.

The only surprise from these news reports was the identity of the group leading the charge against mandatory vaccinations: the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS), a 4,000 member "nonpartisan professional association of physicians in all types of practice and specialties." About half of the members are surgeons and osteopaths. As astounding as it may seem, their provider membership is even smaller than either of chiropractic's two U.S. national associations.

Historically, most chiropractors have supported the right of patient/parent choice in the vaccination controversy, although you wouldn't know it judging from the news media coverage. Once again, we are neither considered nor acknowledged. It's frustrating.

Chiropractic has been the conservative, patient-centered and often lone voice speaking out against unchecked health policy that sometimes reaches absurd levels, as in this litany of shots required for children to attend grade school:

- 5 *DTP*
- 4 *polio*
- 3 *hepatitis b*
- 3 *haemophilus influenzae, type b*
- 3 *rotavirus (oral)*
- 2 *measles-mumps-rubella*
- 1 *chicken pox*

It's hardly a wonder that many parents are questioning the potential harm these vaccines can cause their children and the gradual loss of their right to make health care decisions for their children.

It seems chiropractic has stepped out of place at the head of the parent-choice parade just as it starts to march down Main Street USA. Perhaps we've been pushed out of the way, but regardless,

we're missing a chance to gain greater recognition and respect within the patient/parent community.

Local and national parent groups (like the National Vaccine Information Center) would love to have DCs involved in their efforts to inform parents. This is an opportunity for chiropractic state associations, local societies and individual DCs to network with like-minded members of their communities.

Yes, it will probably cost you a few nights each month and possibly a couple of weekends a year. But when you look at the benefits, it is well worth it. Imagine the impact for chiropractic (and your practice) if your comments were included in the local newspaper article on the topic. Perhaps you could even help write the press release.

As many practice management consultants will tell you, community involvement is one of the keys to a successful practice. This is not only a chance to reach consumers with the chiropractic message, but to reach families. And you can do it within an issue that chiropractic has historically supported.

Once again, opportunity is knocking. Look around your community and see what doors she is opening for you.

### *Reference*

Manning A. Parents fear growing number of vaccines. *USA Today*, August 3, 1999.

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