

## Chiropractors Lead List of Defaulted Doctors

Editorial Staff

Recently, the Health Resources and Services Administration published an updated list of health care professionals who were in default of their HEAL (Health Education Assistance Loan) program loans. Of the nearly 1,400 defaulters listed by HRSA, more than half (737) were chiropractors, with a combined amount due of \$50.07 million.

As a result of this situation, all health professionals who are in default of their HEAL loans will be excluded from participation in the Medicare and Medicaid programs, meaning they will no longer be reimbursed for treating patients under those programs.

The secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala said, "Health care professionals who have defaulted on taxpayer-supported education loans should not be collecting Medicare or Medicaid patients ... They must pay up or lose out -- on Medicare and Medicaid participation and good credit ratings. Added Dr. Claude Fox, HRSA's acting administrator, "We can't let a few bad apple defaulters get away with taking advantage of the American public and bringing dishonor to their profession."

Since the program's inception, HEAL funds have helped finance the education of more than 160,000 health professionals. The loans for the HEAL program are made by private banks, pension funds, credit unions and other private and state lending institutions to students. The loans are also federally guaranteed, meaning that if a student defaults, the federal government foots the bill and pays of the lender.

In addition to being disqualified from the Medicare and Medicaid programs, HEAL defaulters are also subject to action from the Department of Justice. Such actions can include wage garnishment; attachment of property; seizure of bank accounts; withholding tax refunds; and reporting names to credit bureaus. A complete list of the loan defaulters is available online at [\[url=http://www.defaulteddocs.dhhs.gov\]](http://www.defaulteddocs.dhhs.gov)<http://www.defaulteddocs.dhhs.gov>[/url].

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### Arizona Chiropractic Legislative Conference a Success

Chiropractors are still sending thank-you notes to the Arizona Association of Chiropractic for its first annual conference, held January 29, 1998. The Arizona Chiropractic Legislative Conference (ACLC) was designed as a coordinated opportunity for Arizona's chiropractors to meet and talk with their legislators. It was modeled after the National Chiropractic Legislative Conference (NCLC), which takes place in Washington, D.C. each March. Bringing this event to the local level was the idea of chiropractic attorney David M. Morrison, the Arizona representative to the National Association of Chiropractic Attorneys and president of the Arizona Association of Health Care Lawyers.

Twenty of the 30 members of the Arizona senate attended the ACLC luncheon and spent the lunch hour visiting with chiropractors from their districts. AAC delegates had 27 individual appointments

with house members on the morning of the ACLC and 17 appointments with senators prior to the conference. Information packets with research on the cost-effectiveness of chiropractic and other chiropractic issues were hand-delivered to all 90 legislators.

ACLC attendees were honored with a talk from Senator Gary Richardson (R-27). Senator Richardson has historically been very supportive of chiropractic issues. Also highlighted was a special visit from Arizona senate president Brenda Burns, who met earlier in the day with Dr. David Berg (D-17 AAC delegate). President Burns is supportive of patient freedom of choice; the AAC hopes she will work closely with senator Richardson to help pass legislation to benefit chiropractic.

With approximately 325 DCs/CAs/staff and 60 of the 90 members of the legislature in attendance, ACLC captured the interest of state association presidents and executive directors nationwide. Thanks to the untiring efforts of AAC district delegates who spearheaded a patient petition drive and helped get DCs to attend, the 1st Annual ACLC was a "record-breaker."

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### Kudos to Dr. Honigsfeld

Dr. Robert B. Honigsfeld has been named as the new dean for the Center of Clinical Sciences at Parker College of Chiropractic. A 1977 graduate of New York Chiropractic College, Dr. Honigsfeld has been the director of Sharpstown Chiropractic Clinic since 1979 and has also conducted a private practice in chiropractic orthopedics.

During his chiropractic career, Dr. Honigsfeld has served as the chiropractic sports consultant and team physician for the Houston Boxing Association and was the team physician for the Houston Express indoor soccer team. He has also received a certificate of appreciation from the Texas Board of Chiropractic Examiners and was honored with a Clinical Instructor's Award from New York Chiropractic College.

In his new role at Parker, Dr. Honigsfeld will serve as both a full-time administrator and as an associate professor in the Center for Clinical Sciences. His specific area of responsibility will include the supervision and administration of the Department of Clinical Sciences and Application, Diagnosis and Diagnostic Imaging.

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