

Association for Catholic Chiropractors Begins Membership Drive

Editorial Staff

Today, it is common and necessary to communicate through established networks. In the United States, there are more than 60 million Catholics; in Canada, there are 12.5 million, representing 44 percent of that nation's population. Worldwide, there are more than one billion Catholics.

The Catholic Church itself is one of the largest networked deliverers of health care, with more than 100,000 social service facilities (including 40,000 hospitals and clinics around the globe). It also contains several well-known universities and colleges, which rank among the highest in the world in terms of quality of education.

In the United States alone, the institutional members of the Catholic Health Association-USA (CHA-USA) comprise more than 55 systems directing more than 1,300 health care facilities. CHA-USA also has 51 HMOs and affiliated managed care networks within an integrated delivery system.

There are an estimated 15,000+ Catholic chiropractors in the world. Until recently, there was no public platform to which chiropractic could speak to the thousands of health care facilities sponsored by the Catholic Church. There was no way these chiropractors could speak to local or international Catholic charities, or to other Catholic association professionals.

But the time has come for Catholic chiropractors to be heard. The Association for Catholic Chiropractors (AFCC), an "association of the faithful" officially recognized by proper ecclesial authority under Canon law, has been established as a professional nonprofit corporation.

Since the association's inaugural organizational meeting one year ago, the AFCC has established a structure which will offer members either passive or active autonomous participation. With your help, the AFCC can develop and grow long-term, multilevel relationships with one of the largest providers of health care worldwide, and will now receive pastoral care as a profession from the Catholic Church.

About AFCC's Leadership

The foundational structure of the Association for Catholic Chiropractors is comprehensive, consisting of an executive committee, board of supervisors, representatives and membership. The AFCC's constitution and bylaws are grounded in a theological rationale from church doctrines and tradition, as well as an ideal of collaborative participation and autonomy rooted in the ethics of the chiropractic profession.

Karen Shields Wright, MS, DC is the current president of the association. A 1980 graduate of the New York Chiropractic College, she has served as an adjunct at the University of Bridgeport teaching practice management and communication. This month, she will complete her studies in theology, philosophy and ministry in the graduate school of Fordham University.

P. Thomas Davis, MUP, DC, is the AFCC's vice president. He is a clinical researcher at

Northwestern College of Chiropractic. He was a contributing writer to the World Health Organization's text Occupational Health and Chiropractic, and has authored a book on chiropractic technique.

Joanne Santiago, BS, DC, is the association's treasurer. A 1974 graduate of New York Chiropractic College, she is also a trustee of NYCC. Timothy Slominski, BS, DC, is the secretary of the AFCC and is a graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic.

The association's advisory board is a multidisciplinary unit consisting of ecclesial advisors, noted scholars and professionals who will help guide the AFCC. Among the ecclesial advisors are the Most Rev. Edward M. Egan, JCD, DD, bishop of Bridgeport, who served as the Pope's advisor, and Msgr. Frank Wissell, DD, who is serving as the association's chaplain.

Since the AFCC is a nonpartisan group, there are a number of professional advisors on the board who represent different areas of the chiropractic profession. Among the members are: Robert Hirtle, JD, of the National Association of Chiropractic Attorneys; Frank Zolli, DC, EdD, dean of the University of Bridgeport College of Chiropractic; Gary Krakos, DC, the international liaison for Palmer College; and Francis Corbin, DC, vice president of the ICA.

Benefits of AFCC Membership

With so many chiropractic associations already in existence, why the need for another one? And what can joining the AFCC do for the average Catholic chiropractor? In a word, plenty.

As mentioned before, it is now common that associations communicate through networks. Today, there are many "associations of the faithful." For example, there are associations for accountants; lawyers; medical physicians; nurses; psychiatrists; and other professions. As a fellow "association of the faithful," AFCC is able to network with these other groups for mutual support.

Chiropractors are known for their generous support of service. Many offer free care to the poor directly in their offices or provide service in interfaith sites. Since each diocese has a Catholic charities office, and since 94% of all dioceses in the U.S. have hospitals and clinics, chiropractors needed to have a unifying voice to help share their gifts and tell their stories of the profession within the church. AFCC could become that voice.

As a profession-wide association, AFCC will be able to dialogue with established Catholic organizations on the international level, such as Caritas or Medicus Mundi, which are nongovernmental organizations of the World Health Organization. In fact, the AFCC has already begun conversations with the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations to develop a "modality of cooperation" and will present a proposal for affiliation at their World Congress in September of this year.

Members of AFCC will be able to communicate at the association's website ([url=<http://www.afcc.net>]http://www.afcc.net[url]). With more than 50 million North Americans already online, the Internet could provide a way to speak to as much as 7.5 million Catholics in North America. The association will officially open its website in July of this year.

In addition to the basic amenities afforded to membership, the AFCC will have an online bulletin board for members to communicate, as well as a links section to other Catholic sites. There will also be a newsletter, The Catholic Chiropractor Online Newsletter, which will have sections open to the public. The Newsletter will cover business and clinic ethics as well as pastoral care. Those without Internet access will be faxed information.

Membership is open to all who wish to join. General membership is open to licensed Catholic chiropractors; associate memberships are available for ecumenical, interfaith, student and non-chiropractors. Charter membership dues are by suggested donation and are set on a scale so that all may participate. Religious and student dues are by prayerful donations and no charge, respectively.

For the past year, AFCC has been diligently conducting research of scholarly materials, meeting with church officials, and conducting dialogues with Catholic associations, chiropractic leaders and practicing chiropractors. The association, while small by some standards, has nevertheless grown to a core group of more than 80 members and supporters. With prayer and support, AFCC feels confident in its ability to benefit the individual practitioner as well as the profession at large.

If you are interested in becoming an AFCC member, please write or call:

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