

Pennsylvania Chiropractic Association

Editorial Staff

Membership in the Pennsylvania Chiropractic Association has taken off since the unification at the state convention in 1996 (please see "Pennsylvania's Two Largest Chiropractic Organizations Merge," DC, January 14, 1997). The membership was increased tremendously. The PCA has 48 percent of the state's resident chiropractors as members. Over 250 new members (who were not members of any organization) were added to the ranks after the merger, which has swelled the state association's numbers to over 1,550 chiropractors.

"The present day leadership is a mix of the 'old guard,' who split the Society, and the 'new guard,' who created the association," explains Sam Sarraf, secretary of the PCA Board. "The current leadership, along with the diversity of the board of directors, is what truly makes this organization a model for others to follow. Politically and economically, we have streamlined this organization to function efficiently and to be as cost effective as possible. No longer do we split our resources in two. (Now we have) one lobbyist; one legal consultant; one executive direct; one office and one staff. Most importantly, we have once voice for chiropractic in Pennsylvania."

By merging the Pennsylvania Chiropractic Society and the Pennsylvania Chiropractic Federation, the PCA can now offer the these benefits to its members:

- financial stability (paid off a \$130,000 deficit);
- stable fiscal growth;
- additional member benefits;
- forms and narrative book;
- quality staff members;
- legislative efforts;
- computerized data bases linking DCs and legislators; and
- the PCA Educational and Charitable Foundation.

According to PCA President Mark Minuto, DC:

"Since our merger/consolidation in 1996 the association has had a certain amount of growing pains. And as we all know, 'no pain no gain.' The association is poised for greatness. I expect that by the end of the century the PCA will be one of the top five associations in the country in both membership and effectiveness."

As part of their consolidation effort, the PCA decided to begin communication to all of the DCs in Pennsylvania. Communications Chairperson Kathleen McConnell, DC, comments:

"Last year, with a membership of over 1,500 doctors, we were sending out a bimonthly member newsletter at a cost of \$1.00 per issue (including print, mail merge and postage), plus a production fee for professional coordination and set-up which was approximately \$600 per issue. Although the production piece was of professional quality, it was lacking in hands on information which can only come from a chiropractor who is close to the issues.

"In January of this year, with both cost and staffing as a concern, we brought the production of the newsletter in-house and in the hands of the communications committee. We began to incorporate a different strategy to reach the greatest number of chiropractors of the state with the most cost-effective means, while still maintaining our members with accurate and up-to-date benefits that they deserve as being members of our organization. A monthly newsletter was produced, again at the same high quality, with half of the production cost. As a timely piece of hard news, legislative alerts and insurance changes, we started to send a FYI news flyer to our members. This stayed the gap of the monthly newsletter, and kept the association aware of changes that are pertinent to everyday practice, as well as the association continuing education and member activities, such as district meetings and the state convention.

"With the success of the FYI publication, it has evolved into a bimonthly in-house news flyer for members, but added an exciting punch for the state's chiropractors, which is to work in coordination with Dynamic Chiropractic with the state association newsletter program and produce our first newsletter for both members and nonmembers, which was inserted into the May 31, 1998 edition of *Dynamic Chiropractic*. We were able to reach over 3,600 chiropractors across the state at half the cost of the traditional method of newsletter by mail.

"The production staff of Dynamic Chiropractic made the newsletter process easier than one would have thought. As a practicing chiropractor, my entire day cannot be focused on association business, but DC's staff gave me a step-by-step process for production, and with their layout staff made our publication have the same flavor and professionalism that made this piece a winner across the state. Insights of the professional staff gave our newsletter a unique feel that was both reader-friendly and a quality production.

"The drawback of this newsletter is the lead time required, but we have overcome this six-week timeline by keeping our members informed with the FYI bimonthly news flyers, and saving the material for the Dynamic Chiropractic newsletter. We promote ourselves, develop membership, produce revenue and inform the statewide chiropractic population in a well-distributed and cost-effective manner -- through the Dynamic Chiropractic newsletter program. Our hope is to use this program on a quarterly basis, thus keeping with our mission statement to educate and inform our members and the public."

The PCA's immediate past president, Dr. Roy Love, stresses that the "PCA represents all chiropractors in Pennsylvania, no matter their political or philosophical persuasion. We extend an open door to the remaining small, philosophically-oriented group which we feel would help make the PCA an even stronger organization."

Dynamic Chiropractic's state association newsletter program began when the New York Chiropractic Council wanted to begin communicating with the approximately 5,000 chiropractors in the state of New York. As one of three state associations, the Council wanted to include all New York DCs, regardless of their affiliation. William Remling, DC, who was the chairman of the board at the time, explains how this program evolved:

"Our Council has had a desire to communicate to the entire profession in our state, member and nonmember alike. Dynamic Chiropractic presented the perfect vehicle at the best possible cost.

Their well-qualified and experienced staff have assisted us in the design and production since day one, making the task easy, enjoyable and almost effortless.

"We have used our newsletter insert to rally the entire state on last year's insurance equality bill, which was signed by Governor Pataki last October against heavy pressure from the Business Council, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and others.

"Recognized statewide, we now have the education department sending us announcements for publication, as well as, nonmembers and members of other state chiropractic organizations. This has become the "voice of the profession" in New York and almost entirely paid for by the advertisers who support it.

"We also use this newsletter insert to advertise our annual convention and devote our entire issue to that event. Breaking news, upcoming seminars, "call for action," statewide surveys, public printing of new regulations, information on billing code changes, legislators' voting records and more can easily be distributed by this method. Properly organized, it pays for itself."

The goal of the state association newsletter program is to facilitate communication between chiropractic state associations and all of the doctors of chiropractic in their state. For more information on this program, please call Paula Evans at 1-800-324-7758.

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