

Chiropractic Center Will Be Established at NIH

Editorial Staff

On September 30, 1996, President Clinton signed into law the 1997 Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act. In doing so, the president approves almost \$1 million for continuation of the "chiropractic demonstration grants program." This is an increase of \$110,000 from the amount appropriated in 1996.

Under the four-year-old demonstration grants program (initiated by an American Chiropractic Association-sponsored amendment to the Health Professions Reauthorization Act), chiropractic colleges conduct collaborative demonstration projects with DCs and MDs working together to diagnose and treat spinal and lower back conditions.

This newly signed bill also earmarks more than \$4.1 million for continuation of the "rural health interdisciplinary training program," an improvement of \$445,000 over last year. This program addresses the shortage of health care professionals in rural areas through interdisciplinary training projects, including clinical experience in rural settings, to prepare students from various disciplines, including chiropractic, to practice together.

But perhaps the most exciting aspect of the bill is the establishment of the Chiropractic Center within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Alternative Medicine. The bill increases the overall budget for the NIH's Office of the Director by approximately \$20 million. Along with that increase are a number of directives, including a mandate that establishes the Center for Chiropractic Research.

The funding amount for the Center for Chiropractic must still be negotiated with NIH, but it is expected to be between one-half million dollars and two million dollars the first year. Funding would be ongoing, with the bulk expended for chiropractic research grants.

Not only will the new Center for Chiropractic enhance our opportunities for federal research funding, it establishes a specifically-named chiropractic presence in the NIH's Office of Alternative Medicine.

The Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) worked closely with the ACA in holding several joint meetings with Senate offices to discuss continued funding for these programs. Chiropractic's primary support came from Senators Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Tom Harkin (D-IA), respectively the chairman and ranking Democrat on the Senate Health and Human Services appropriations subcommittee. Because of its efforts in research and its special relationship with Senator Harkin, Palmer University was particularly active in supporting this effort.

"The grassroots activities of the ACA, its members, and the ACC pushed the profession over the top," said Lowry Morton, DC, ACA chairman of the board.

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