

History Lessons

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Over the past several months and in some cases years, the issue of merger between the ICA and the ACA has kept coming up. This issue is usually raised by people who are sitting on the sidelines, playing no part in either organization. Please understand, the last thing that chiropractic needs is to merge with the forces that have brought us the doctor of chiropractic medicine degree, homeopathy and manual medicine, at the expense of our principles and our uniqueness in the health care marketplace.

Cooperation

Merger? No. At this critical time of challenge and opportunity, no one would gain from the squandering of months of valuable time and hundreds of thousands of dollars in pursuit of a merger phantom that would only hurt not help chiropractic. This is exactly what happened the last time the question came up, and we continue to feel its ill effects. That money and energy, which could have been applied to fight legislative, public relations or managed care battles, is gone forever. Instead I would like to call upon the ACA to join with the ICA in a period of unprecedented cooperation on the areas upon which we agree. Let's not begin to throw stones at each other saying who backed out first and why and when, but rather, put together like-minded people who can sit down and agree upon certain obvious areas: legislation, the managed care phenomenon, and quality assurance and practice guidelines. In these areas we have much that we can agree upon. Let's work there and recognize the futility of trying to work where we profoundly disagree.

Cooperative activity in vital areas is consistent with ICA's primary goal: to help the doctor in the field as well as their patients. There seems to be a little clique of people who are mesmerized by the politics of the profession and so dedicated to expanding their place in those politics that they lose sight of principle and focus exclusively on organization, giving little or no thought to the work that needs to be done for chiropractic. There is a proposal to establish some kind of grand council for the profession where the ICA and ACA and other groups would sit down and meet to chart the course of our profession's future. Among the other groups discussed as participants are FCER, NCMIC, COCSA, and the FCLB. What's comic about this proposal is the illusion that it is attempting to create. The proponents of such a council would have you believe that this series of groups would represent the entire profession. In fact, most of these groups share the same philosophy and are governed by the same small group that dominates the ACA. This clearly reflects a political agenda that seeks to aggrandize one organization and its philosophy, the ACA, not bring all of chiropractic together.

Individual DCs join a variety of groups for a wide range of diverse reasons. ICA will not participate in any activity or organization that represents the stacked deck mentality that so many endeavors within the profession suffer from. I do not condemn the FCLB, FCER, NCMIC, etc., or the things they do. I simply state the truth that they reflect an ACA perspective and will act in lock-step with the ACA hierarchy. Clever politicians can engineer any vote they want merely by limiting participation in the election process. This is what happened at the so-called Mercy Conference where a small group of self-selected individuals established the rules, named the voters, and now are attempting to pass off the product of that conference as reflecting the will of the people. This is

nonsense, as is the document it produced.

ICA stands for a chiropractic profession based on its traditional and unique concepts, principles and practices. Organizations that support in deeds, regardless of the rhetoric, aggressive efforts to change the fundamental nature of chiropractic to a manual medical science, represent a direct and immediate threat to the future of chiropractic. All good intentions notwithstanding, ICA cannot out of conscience even appear to encourage such trends. Thus, while we may have appreciation for FCER, for some of the research funding they have done throughout the years, we have every right to question the agenda of a group that changes the name of its publication from a distinctly chiropractic title to, A Manual Medicine and Holistic Health News Digest. There is a certain amusement in explanations I have heard from some quarters that the name change was a mistake and that it was supposed to be Holistic News Digest. Clearly however, these word games expose an intent in shifting focus within FCER from chiropractic to any alternative therapy.

ICA recognizes that chiropractic is comprised of a wide range of viewpoints and a vast number of organizations. Those who believe that chiropractic will be "unified" if the ICA and the ACA merge need to bring their thinking back into the realm of reality. I agree that ICA and ACA are the two leading organizations in chiropractic. I also believe that the competition between ICA and ACA, both in terms of programs and ideas, is the profession's best guarantee that no one organization will lead the profession off a cliff. I believe in cooperation between ICA and ACA as partners for progress. Let's start from there and see where it leads us. ICA members will, I believe, support such joint efforts. The same members will not support merger. We have seen too much time wasted and scarce resources squandered in the fruitless pursuit of a virtually meaningless political goal. Let's sit down and meet, let's sit down and cooperate, let's sit down and discuss and plan, but even more, let's sit down together and accomplish.

We often hear it said that history repeats itself. I do not necessarily agree. I believe that this is a poor excuse for even worse planning and a refusal on the part of people in authority and leadership positions to act responsibly. ICA is committed to making history, not letting the mistakes of the past repeat themselves with the explanation that it was bound to happen.

Doctors who belong to or support the ICA are in the mainstream of the profession. I urge all of you to join and be heard. Join and work, join and build. Join and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

P.S. See you in Davenport this September.

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