

Telling Our Own Story

IT'S ABOUT TIME

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Believe it or not, it was a little over six years ago that the chiropractic profession, led by the now famous "Chicago Four," defeated the American Medical Association (AMA) in court. The "guilty" anti-trust verdict was a wake-up call not only to the AMA, but to the rest of the world.

Since then, we have received ever-increasing media coverage. The press has discovered chiropractic as a profession and as a news topic. Hardly a week goes by without a magazine, newspaper or television program covering some aspect of chiropractic. Whether it is the upcoming, as yet unscheduled (at press time) "20/20" piece on chiropractic's care of children (which will probably be rather unfavorable), or Mel Gibson on the "Tonight Show" talking for almost 15 minutes about the personal benefits of chiropractic care, the media is giving chiropractic plenty of exposure.

The news reports of late have been mixed: some are positive, some are negative, and only a few are well-balanced. Overall, the media has increasingly presented chiropractic in a better light. Many negative issues have faded as information and understanding have prevailed.

With all of this wonderful exposure, there is still one problem. While we may have given the media something to talk about, it is simply that: THEM talking about US.

The chiropractic profession has failed to present its own message. Consequently, we have no control over what the public is currently learning about chiropractic. You may influence the thinking of a few patients and their families, but the other 90 percent of the public will be listening to what "20/20" has to say about chiropractic pediatrics. As you read this, thousands, perhaps millions of people are forming opinions of chiropractic based upon an article or newscast written by someone who doesn't answer to you or any other member of the profession.

If this sad state of affairs continues too much longer, the opinions of millions of people regarding chiropractic care will be set. We will then have the unenviable, difficult, and expensive task of trying to change their minds.

What's standing in our way? What is keeping the chiropractic profession from telling the world who we are and what we have to offer?

There are actually two hurdles that this profession must overcome if we are to begin an effective public relations campaign. The first is the easiest to solve: money. To conduct the kind of advertising that is needed to reach that other 90 percent, we will all have to contribute a small portion. This will be our investment in the future.

The second hurdle is much more important and much more difficult: unity. No, we don't have to all join the same association, but the existing major organizations must come together and develop the message that this profession wants to place in the minds of the public. The essence of chiropractic must be presented in such a way that the lay person can recognize its incredible value and respond appropriately.

No one chiropractic organization has yet been able to make a dent in the minds of the majority of the public. It would take a well planned, long-term effort. What are we waiting for?

As the plans for our 1995 Chiropractic Centennial unfold, a faint glimmer of hope is beginning to shine. As the number of chiropractors who are becoming sponsors increases, so do the public relations plans of the Centennial Foundation. This is because every dollar that is donated by you as a Centennial sponsor will be used solely for the purpose of presenting the chiropractic message to the public.

With the support of all of the major national organizations and most of the state associations, 1995 has the potential to be quite a year. The CCF's plan calls for world-wide exposure through a Rose Parade Float, some type of national television presentation, grass roots media programs, and patient involvement opportunities.

Believe it or not, this is all being accomplished in harmony through the Chiropractic Centennial Foundation. What is needed is for every DC to become a sponsor for at least \$1,000. This may sound like a lot, but it works out to only \$40 per month added to your regular bills.

If we can follow the example of our major organizations, and join together, we can amass an advertising budget that will set the world (and the AMA) on its ear. Forty-nine thousand chiropractors donating \$40 per month will quickly enable us to tell our own message to this hurting world.

It's time we spoke for ourselves.

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FEBRUARY 1994