

Did You Feel It?

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Did you feel it? That was the question everyone in Southern California was asking after the big earthquake. The next part of the conversation usually included queries about its effects and damages. Most were awoken, startled and shaken. Some were not so lucky.

Another kind of earthquake has rocked the chiropractic profession: health care reform. It has been followed by many "after shocks": managed care, utilization review, denied claims, etc. But in this analogy, it isn't the ground beneath us that is moving: it's our world that's changing.

These are frightening times. While many have already been affected, every DC in the U.S. (if not the world) should be awake, startled, and a little shaken.

After the big earthquake in Los Angeles, some people decided that the only thing to do was to move. They testified before television camera crews and newspaper reporters that the only answer was to leave everything and flee to another state. No one seemed to recognize that they would be leaving a shaky Southern California only to face snow storms, frozen pipes, extreme heat, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and other varieties of weather and natural disasters. Every place on the planet has its positive and negative attributes.

The same reaction appears to be espoused by a small number of DCs. They are convinced that the chiropractic profession is on shaky ground. They seem convinced that other health care professions offer security and advantages not available in chiropractic today. They are ignoring many of the problems inherent in health care in the hopes of finding a "safe" way to practice.

Yes, there are other routes that a DC can take. Yes, there are a few colleges in the U.S. that have established a "fast track" for chiropractors wishing to become allopaths. But can anyone be so naive as to believe medicine is not at least equally affected by the health care reform shake up?

Those of us who have lived in Southern California all or most of our lives have always been aware of the potential for "the big one." We have our water heaters braced and bottled water stored. In short, we have accepted the facts and made provisions for our security and survival. This is also true for everyone who lives in an area prone to bad weather or natural disasters. It comes with territory.

Health care reform is upon us, all of us. It is affecting some more than others, but every health care profession is taking their turn. Before it is all over, there may be DCs that can't make it in practice. But if that's true, there will be some MDs in the same predicament.

The key to survival is not running away, and not ignoring life's realities. The future of chiropractic will be built on the firm foundation that has been handed to us with an eye on the future. It is adapting the practice of chiropractic into the new forms of health care delivery that are being developed.

From where I sit, this could be our finest hour.

The world is waking up to the benefits of chiropractic adjustments. The economic demands of managed care are moving safe, effective, efficient chiropractic care to the forefront of back care. Wait until the public realizes all of the other nonmusculoskeletal benefits.

The challenges bring opportunities with them. Look around, see chiropractic's potential. See YOUR potential.

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