

How to Become Part of the Solution

Christopher Lyden, DC

For decades organized medicine has attempted to paint the chiropractic profession as part of the problem in health care. The 11 year lawsuit against the AMA which found them guilty of antitrust and "lawlessness" revealed that they were simply trying to "contain and eliminate" their rivals in health care -- the entire chiropractic profession.

As evidenced by the "20/20" episode on chiropractic and children, and an unscientific article on stroke released nationwide, some will continue to lower themselves to lies, distortion, and deceit in an attempt to eliminate the competition.

Medicine used to claim we were uneducated, incompetent, dangerous, ineffective, and expensive. They lied. Even when they knew the facts they lied.

Every chiropractic doctor and most chiropractic patients know that we are well educated, highly competent, extremely safe, and very cost efficient. All the facts support this.

Unfortunately, state and federal legislators don't know these facts because we haven't told them. They write the laws in your state and mine, determining scope of practice, access of our services, and reimbursement, and they are about to determine how the disease care system in America should be reformed.

If you want to be included in the decision making process which will decide your professional future, your financial future, and your patient's ability to be drug free and healthy through conservative, effective, cost efficient chiropractic care, then it is time to take action. Your family, your patients, and future generations who will need affordable chiropractic care require this of you.

You can become part of the solution by learning what specific steps you can take to have an enormous impact on the future of health care.

How health care will be administered, who will be reimbursed for their services, and what type of doctors all patients will have access to, will be determined by the steps you take and how well you educate the decision makers.

At a legislative meeting in Washington recently, Senator Orin Hatch recalled a story from when he first arrived in Washington as a freshman senator. He was placed on a committee which was chaired by the powerful Senator Edmund Muskie. One day Senator Muskie raised a bill in the committee and said it must be passed. Senator Hatch had read the bill and thought it was a "useless piece of trash" and naively questioned the committee chairman why it should be passed. Senator Muskie bellowed, "Because everybody is for this bill." The freshman senator from Utah asked how he knew everybody was for it. "Because everyone in my state is for it," was the reply. Senator Hatch persisted to inquire if a poll had been taken in Senator Muskie's state, or how it was that he assumed that everybody in his state was for this bill. The senator's reply: "All six letters that he had received from his constituents demanded that this bill be passed."

The following key points were suggested by the senators to be most effective way to inform them, impress them, and educate them concerning the facts and the desires of their constituents, from which they base their decisions and votes.

1. Contact 5-10 colleagues in your area to participate with you on a common day off. As a group you represent a profession.
2. Include at least one lay person who is strongly supportive of chiropractic. If possible, bring along a patient who personally knows the congressperson.
3. Call your local congressperson's office to schedule a 15 minute meeting with the congressperson (not an aide) to take place ASAP.
4. Meet with them at their convenience, on your day off.
5. Keep it concise and professional. (They will resent you wasting their time.)
6. Be prepared (rehearse). Clearly define why chiropractic should be included in health care reform, how it must be included (direct access), and why their constituents demand it. (You may appear to have an ulterior motive, but your patients/their constituents do not.)
7. Leave a one-page summary of your meeting for their review. (Reinforce the facts of chiropractic, because these concepts are new to them.)
8. Each participant in your group should send them a follow-up thank you note within two days. (Out of courtesy and to reinforce your message.)
9. Compose various letters of support for chiropractic for your patients to sign and send (in their name) to their congressperson. (These are read, and have an impact by sheer numbers.)
10. The week before a bill is up for a vote have your patients call their representative from your front desk, stating their name, the district they live in, and that a specific bill be supported.

A one-page summation of reasons why chiropractic is the superior form of health care could include:

- Chiropractic is the second largest health profession in the world.
- There are 50,000 doctors of chiropractic in the U.S. serving 30 million patients (as of 1993).

- The modern chiropractor is well-educated and competent by the nature of their training to offer primary care.
- DCs receive extensive professional education on a par with other primary care providers (typically six to eight years of instruction and internship).
- Chiropractors provide highly effective health care to their patients. Studies from the Canadian government, the RAND Corp., the British Medical Society, New Zealand government, and numerous U.S. universities consistently conclude the superiority and clinical effectiveness of chiropractic care compared to medical care of physical therapy.
- Chiropractic offers tremendous cost containment potential to our health care system. Workers' compensation studies have shown chiropractic care to be from 2-10 times more cost effective than medical care for identical conditions.
- Chiropractic services are in high demand. Americans make more visits to non-MD providers (425 million in one year) than to all primary care MDs (388 million), says New England Journal of Medicine.
- Patients of chiropractors are three times more likely to be very satisfied with their care than are patients of MDs.
- Chiropractic is extremely safe. Estimates range from 1,000 to 50,000 times safer than medical procedures for the same conditions. Malpractice rates reflect this.
- Because of its effects on the nervous system and health, chiropractic has been proven effective in normalizing function, and does not merely mask symptoms with drugs. Chiropractic care restores the body's natural recuperative abilities.
- Many common ailments have been shown to be alleviated/corrected (headaches, asthma, ear infections, infantile colic, painful menstruation, immune problems), beyond the musculoskeletal pain syndromes commonly treated by chiropractic. This is due to chiropractic's holistic approach to restore all body functions.
- Chiropractic care is not simply an adjunct to medical care, it offers a significant nondrug alternative to traditional medical care, and therefore requires direct access.
- Chiropractors are trained to refer to medical specialists when its necessary. MDs traditionally have refused to refer to DCs when it is in their patients' best interest, therefore direct access is needed to maintain patient freedom of choice.

Christopher Lyden, DC
Voorhees, New Jersey

JULY 1994

©2024 Dynamic Chiropractic™ All Rights Reserved