

What's the Agenda?

WHY ISN'T UNITY THE GOAL?

Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

For the last year now, the profession has been watching the apparent effects of the U.S. Secretary of Education's denial of the Straight Chiropractic Academic Standards Association (SCASA)'s accreditation renewal. Since the U.S. Secretary's notification of the show cause hearing on April 11, 1991, SCASA has made great efforts to encourage the Secretary of Education's office to reconsider the decision. (Please see "U.S. Department of Education Denies SCASA Accreditation Renewal" in the October 9, 1992 issue for the complete written decision of then Secretary Lamar Alexander, and the chronology of events which led to SCASA's loss of recognition.) But despite SCASA'S efforts, their recognition ends on June 4, 1993.

When the Secretary of Education made his decision, everyone was asking: "What is SCASA going to do?" "What about the students?" "Is this the end of the SCASA-straight segment of our profession?" The answers are becoming more apparent.

The actions of SCASA, the Federation of Chiropractic Straight Organizations (FSCO), and the World Chiropractic Alliance (WCA) are no secret. And why should they be? The individuals involved in these organizations hold very strong convictions. You may not agree with those beliefs, but they are a part of this profession and, if only for that reason, you must respect them.

It was not a surprise when the WCA and SCASA conducted their own consensus conference to develop "straight guidelines." When the Wyndham Guidelines are finally published, no one should be shocked to find that they are based on nondiagnosis, nonreferral, and vertebral subluxation correction only -- the hallmark of SCASA chiropractic.

When the first National Chiropractic E & M Coding Conference met in Phoenix, Arizona last November, no one should have been surprised to read the WCA recommending a limitation of (SCASA) straight chiropractors to only the first two levels of examination: the "problem focused" and "expanded problem focused" levels. The work published by that conference stated one exception: "Note: Straight Chiropractic will routinely NOT exceed the Expanded Problem Focus Level." (Please see "Chiropractic E & M Coding Conference" in the December 18, 1992 issue.)

Many chiropractic leaders (particularly in countries outside the United States) were surprised and angered by the WCA's efforts to contact and influence foreign governments to propagate the SCASA-straight guidelines and education to foreign governments around the world. World chiropractic leaders referred to the WCA's actions as "inappropriate," "detrimental," "sabotage," "arrogance," "attempting a coup against established chiropractic," and "mindless philosophical posturings." (Please see "Chiropractic Worldwide Responds to WCA 'Meddling'" in the February 12, 1993 issue.) Considering the at-any-cost determination that the WCA has demonstrated in the past, these actions are part of a consistent pattern.

In keeping with the WCA's policy to act completely independently of the rest of the profession, the WCA recently circumvented the Arizona Association of Chiropractic with a piece of legislation (please see "Novel Legislative Proposals and Some Controversy in Arizona" by former WCA

President Alan Immerman, D.C., in this issue).

Why is a legislative/governmental recognition so important to SCASA/WCA/FSCO? The answer may be found in an editorial by Gregory A. Stetzel, D.C., editor of the FSCO Review:

"With the creation of the Wyndham and Mercy Documents and the governmental trend toward regulation and standardization, it is clear that chiropractic has reached a time where it would be appropriate for a split to occur. It is clear that neither straight nor mixer will cease to exist despite either side's efforts to take control. It is also clear that neither side is able to peacefully co-exist with the other under the auspices of one profession; the principles and purposes of the major factions differ too widely. Wyndham and Mercy have given us the necessary guidelines with which to direct such a split. Chiropractic would survive as chiropractic under the doctrines of the Wyndham Conference, while the Mercy Conference would serve as the doctrine of the new profession -- call it what you like but not chiropractic. Only then can we get on with the unilateral progress of our separate professions."

Unfortunately, Dr. Stetzel's editorial ignores the facts. After June 4, 1993, graduates of SCASA colleges will only be able to practice in four to seven states. If chiropractic has truly "reached a time where it would be appropriate for a split to occur," it would be more realistic for the SCASA graduates (representing approximately two percent of the profession in the United States) to create a "new profession" rather than the other 98 percent. BUT IS THIS NECESSARY?

While the medical profession is the last group we should imitate, we can learn from them. They have at least been bright enough not to factionalize their profession. Instead, they have created specialties and subspecialties.

Why not create a specialty for vertebral subluxation only chiropractors? It could be a certified program offered at the next WCA convention. Those who wish to practice according to limited E & M Codes, the Wyndham Guidelines, and a more narrow focus, could complete a program leading to a new specialty designation. For the sake of discussion, let's say the "American College of Straight Chiropractic" (ACSC). This would allow a chiropractor who embraces the SCASA-straight philosophy to be designated as "John Doe, D.C., ACSC."

This new specialty could have a great deal of autonomy, particularly with third-party payers. Legislatively, this specialty could support and introduce new laws that would further define and support their specialty without affecting the broader chiropractic laws now in place.

It is the mission of this publication to strive for "unity without uniformity" within this profession. A SCASA-CCE divorce is not the answer. Better we should encourage our SCASA-straight brothers and sisters to achieve their autonomy by forming their own specialty.

If you agree with this concept, please join me in writing a letter of encouragement to:

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Federation of Straight Chiropractic Organizations
871 Portobello Road
Toms River, NJ 08753-4005*

Ralph Boone, D.C., President Straight Chiropractic Academic Standards Association 8420 Beverly Road Pico Rivera, CA 90660-2281

*Terry Rondberg, D.C., President
World Chiropractic Alliance*

*2950 N. Dobson Road, Suite 1
Chandler, AZ 85224*

Give these fellow chiropractors your support in forming the first specialty for subluxation only chiropractic. Your letters of encouragement can help end the fighting. Let's keep our unity.

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