

Welcome to the Major Leagues

IT'S TIME TO MAKE A CHOICE

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The United States is in a health care crisis. First Lady Hillary Clinton is heading up a task force that must formulate recommendations that will be a basis for health care reform bills which will ultimately go before Congress. Chiropractic wants to be a part of this new health care system.

There are certain dynamics to being a part of the emerging health care system. You aren't going to be included if you are considered a renegade. If you want to be part of the team, you must be a team player. This is where the choice comes.

One of the top priorities of the First Lady's task force is the immunization of children. This is not a negotiable issue. They believe that immunization is crucial to the overall health care of the citizenry.

Although none of the accredited colleges have a policy against immunization, there are still some chiropractors who are very much opposed to vaccinations. Unfortunately, this is not being a part of the new health care team.

In a world that demands accountability of its health care providers by scientific trials, vaccinations are in a very solid position. Yes, there are a certain number of individuals who have adverse reactions to inoculations that may result in death. But the same can be said for the minute number of chiropractic patients that die from a cervical adjustment. The chances are probably equally remote.

The unwillingness of a small percentage of chiropractors to consider the benefits of vaccinations and antibiotics (particularly for children) was the key issue in a front page article in the March 18, 1993 issue of the Wall Street Journal (please see page XX of this issue). The subheading stated in big letters: "Discouraging Immunization." Needless to say, this did NOT promote chiropractic's position as a responsible member of the health care team which will emerge from Mrs. Clinton's task force.

At this moment, the ACA and the ICA are both spending MILLIONS of dollars trying to secure our place as primary care providers. Every member of the profession has been asked to write letters (and encourage each one of their patients to write letters) in an effort to keep chiropractic from being eliminated via the legislative process.

This is not to suggest that all use of drugs should be encouraged. It is not even an attempt to suggest that all vaccinations are safe and effective. Consider the elimination of small pox vaccinations several years ago. These vaccinations have been eliminated because they caused more cases than had been reported without the vaccination. This is an issue of responsible health care.

Almost everyone in the chiropractic profession is against the use of drugs or surgery, except when there's no alternative. This is not even an issue. Every responsible DC will refer a case to a medical doctor when it is appropriate to do so. And like it or not, almost every DC will seek medical care for a loved one when an emergency demands it.

Now we are faced with a choice. Is a position of absolutely no vaccinations and no antibiotics a responsible position? Or is it an extremist's view (estimated at less than 1% of the profession) which must now be clarified by the profession as a whole?

The world, especially the members of the Task Force on Health Care Reform, the House, and the Senate are watching to see our reaction. We don't need to wholeheartedly embrace vaccinations, drugs or surgery. We need to stand for responsible, conservative health care that seeks to allow the body, as much as possible, to heal itself unencumbered.

It's time to see ourselves as part of the health care system of the world rather than against anyone who doesn't believe the way we do.

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