

ICA's Full-Page Open Letter to Pres. Clinton

STUDENTS SEND MESSAGE TO CLINTON IN WASHINGTON POST

Editorial Staff

The student members of the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) presented a full-page open letter to President Clinton in the April 27th Washington Post. The letter appeared in the paper's first section on page A13. The Washington post has the fifth highest circulation of American newspapers (791,289).

Below, is reproduced the full letter, substantially reduced, of course:

AN OPEN LETTER TO
President Clinton and the White House Health Care Task Force

Dear President Clinton:

We in the chiropractic profession recognize the urgent need to reform our nation's health care system to extend access to quality health services to all our citizens and to contain health care costs. In this effort, however, consumer choice and basic patient freedom must not be eroded since patient involvement is the best guarantee of quality service. As you develop your health care reform plan, we urge you to remember that every day across our nation more than a million consumers of all ages, from infants to the most senior of our citizens, visit the offices of doctors of chiropractic for health care that is safe, effective and clinically appropriate. Chiropractic patients receive care from highly trained and skilled health care professionals who apply the highest technical and ethical standards to their practice

Chiropractic is the second largest primary health care profession in the United States and the fastest growing primary care profession in the world.

There are approximately 50,000 DCs in active practice in the United States spread from rural areas to inner cities. More than 10,000 students are currently studying in chiropractic educational programs accredited by a federally-recognized body. Doctors of chiropractic have been licensed and recognized as primary providers for many decades in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Doctors of Chiropractic provide clinically effective health care.

Detailed studies conducted according to the highest scientific standards, and published by

organizations as diverse as the RAND Corporation and the British Medical Association, continue to show the clinical effectiveness of chiropractic care.]

Doctors of Chiropractic provide cost-effective care.

Studies have consistently shown chiropractic to be a more cost-effective method of caring for neuro-muskuloskeletal conditions, thus offering significant cost-containment potential to our health care system. DCs are trained to employ conservative, early-intervention methods as an alternative to surgical utilization, drug therapy and other high-cost treatments with a high degree of efficiency and patient satisfaction. Chiropractic is recognized by governmental health care programs. Chiropractic is included in Medicare, Medicaid, Federal Employees Health Benefits Programs, Federal Workers' Compensation and all state workers' compensation programs. Chiropractic students are qualified to receive federal student loan assistance and DCs are authorized to be commissioned as health care officers in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Doctors of Chiropractic receive extensive, demanding professional education on par with other primary health care providers.

To receive the degree of Doctor of Chiropractic, candidates must complete extensive undergraduate prerequisites and complete four years of resident, full-time instruction in an accredited program. Students are thoroughly trained in the appropriate use of sophisticated diagnostic technology including X-ray, laboratory procedures and other state-of-the-art investigative technologies. The capacity to fully evaluate the health care needs of the patient, including appropriate referrals to other health professionals when necessary, is an important objective of chiropractic education.

Chiropractic services are in high demand.

Tens of millions of American consumers routinely opt for chiropractic services and this number is rapidly growing. In 1993, more than 30 million consumers will make chiropractic a regular part of their health care program, even though personal out-of-pocket expenditures may be entailed. If there is one primary health care professional that can point to the private sector demand and to marketplace viability for economic validation, it is chiropractic.

The chiropractic profession believes in freedom of choice of health care systems and providers and in informed consent.

Individual consumers must be free to select the system of health care they feel best meets their

needs. This freedom should include the right to select chiropractic care. The chiropractic profession also believes that consumers must be provided with accurate risk and outcome information on all health care procedures so that they may make truly informed judgments about procedures such as surgery, drug therapy, etc.

Chiropractic offers a significant alternative to traditional medicine.

A recent New England Journal of Medicine article affirmed that Americans made more visits to non-M.D. providers (425 million visits) than to all U.S. primary care M.D.s (388 million visits). Expenditures associated with use of alternative therapy in 1990 amounted to approximately 13.7 billion dollars. The figure is comparable to the 12.8 billion dollars spent out-of-pocket annually for all hospitalization in the U.S. One out of three Americans routinely uses alternative health care.

This message is presented by the thousands of student members of the International Chiropractors Association, future doctors of chiropractic currently studying at accredited chiropractic institutions across the United States.

ICA

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MAY 1993