

Chiropractic Report Calls for Registry of DCs in United Kingdom

PRINCESS DIANA DRAWS FRONT-PAGE PRESS COVERAGE FOR CHIROPRACTIC

Editorial Staff

The British tabloids, the Daily Express, Daily Mail, Mirror, and the Times, were out in force to report Princess Diana's appearance at a May 5th London news conference (or "launch," as the British call it), publicizing the release of the Report of a Working Party on Chiropractic. The report calls for statutory regulation of chiropractic in the United Kingdom.

The document, financed by King Edward's Hospital Fund (London), addresses the problem of unqualified practitioners calling themselves chiropractors. The report recommends regulation over standards of education and training, and to ensure professional conduct and high standards throughout the British Isles.

The group responsible for the report, the Working Party on Chiropractic, is a 10-member group chaired by Sir Thomas Bingham. The members include four DCs; one medical journalist; a radiologist; a professor of clinical neurology; a past president of the Royal College of Surgeons; and a past president of the British Medical Association.

"The scheme of regulation which the Working Party proposes," said Chairman Sir Thomas Bingham, "is designed to ensure that any member of the public seeking treatment or advice from a chiropractor will receive a truly professional service, namely the service of a properly educated, trained and experienced attendant subject to appropriate professional standards and discipline."

Lord Walton, a member of Working Party on Chiropractic and past president of the British Medical Association, said he was "... impressed not only by the quality of the education now being provided for chiropractors in the United Kingdom at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, but also by the quality of the research in which some of them are engaged."

Lord Walton said he would do his best to see that a bill is prepared and introduced into Parliament on behalf of chiropractic. A similar bill to regulate osteopaths is currently before Parliament.

Princess Diana, a patron of the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic, spoke at the news conference at the King's Fund Centre, her every move and word recorded by reporters from the London tabloids.

Diana told the audience that she uses chiropractic for her migraine headaches and stress. "When you think what you put your body through each day, it's not surprising we need help," she said. She also revealed having received both osteopathy and chiropractic manipulations. She was asked if she preferred one to the other: "No," she said, "but chiropractic was better for my body."

The need for a single, statutory registry of DCs becomes apparent when you look at the current triumvirate of British registries:

The British Chiropractic Association (BCA), founded in 1925, has a registry of 525 members,

composed of graduates of the North American schools and the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic (AECC) at Bournemouth. Before 1965, European DCs were trained for the most part in North America. In 1965 the AECC opened, and in 1988 became the first complementary health college to offer an accredited degree course in the country.

Since 1992, graduates of the AECC have been required to take an extra year of postgraduate training in clinical practice with a recognized practitioner to attain full registration with the BCA.

The Institute of Pure Chiropractic (200 members) and the British Association of Applied Chiropractic (60 members) field graduates from the McTimoney School and the Witney School in Oxford, where students follow part-time course study leading to chiropractic diplomas.

By 1991, the three associations agreed on the need for common standards of education and formed the Chiropractic Registration Steering Group. The group's goal was to achieve a level of standards equivalent to the European Council on Chiropractic Education within five years of passage of chiropractic legislation.

The report of the Working Party proposes a registry of chiropractors maintained by a General Chiropractic Council composed of three groups:

- 10 registered DCs -- elected by DCs;
- five lay members and one medical practitioner -- appointed by privy council;
- three academicians engaged in teaching chiropractic -- appointed by privy council after consultation with secretaries of education.

The report proposes that practitioners who have devoted at least five of the last seven years to competent practice would be placed on the new registry. There would also be a conditional register for those who've been in practice four out of the last six years, and a provisional register for those in their first year of practice.

Five years after registration begins, all chiropractic colleges will have to attain standards equivalent to those laid down by the European Council on Chiropractic Education.

"All chiropractic organizations welcome the report and its recommendations," said Ian Hutchinson, a Working Party member and chairman of the Chiropractic Registration Steering Group. "The report is a landmark for chiropractic in the United Kingdom. Chiropractic is already statutorily regulated in 17 other countries. Regulation should now follow here."

The Royal College of General Practitioners seconds the need for legislation to regulate chiropractic: "Such regulation will enable general practitioners as well as their patients to be able to identify those chiropractors who have successfully completed training courses."

JUNE 1993