

DC -- Chiropractic Critic

Dynamic Chiropractic Staff

Editor's note: Charles DuVall Jr. has long been a critic of various practices within the chiropractic profession. The recent focus on chiropractic pediatrics has involved his opinion in both the print and television media (please see "Under Scrutiny" beginning on the front page of this issue).

Dr. DuVall is on the executive board of the National Council Against Health Fraud and is the president of the National Association for Chiropractic Medicine. In an exclusive interview, he explains his own views about chiropractic:

DC: Can you make some additional comments about what you had to say regarding chiropractic pediatric treatments that was aired June 2nd on the CBS Evening News?

Dr. Duvall: When I was interviewed, they filmed for about an hour and a half. They chose a 20 second soundbite of that interview for the CBS broadcast. During the interview, I tried to inform the reporter that I felt chiropractic was a very efficacious form of treatment for neuromusculoskeletal conditions of neuromusculoskeletal origin, but that I did have great concerns of how some members of the profession were trying to market that they had special expertise in pediatrics or how they were trying to inform the public that through spinal manipulative treatment, that they did not need to have immunization, or concern for antibiotics, or other childhood illnesses.

DC: You're a member of the executive board of the National Council Against Health Fraud. The council has long had the issue of chiropractic pediatrics on their agenda. Did the comments you made on CBS about pediatrics tie-in with the efforts of the NCHF to focus on chiropractic pediatrics?

I am a member of the board of directors of the NCHF and also sit on a committee that is looking to write a position paper relative to health fraud and quackery directed at children. There has never been a specific delineation made that it is only chiropractors that have fraudulent actions in any area. But because of those questionable techniques that chiropractors are seeking to employ or seeking to manifest on the pediatric population. I have been asked to look at those and assist them in that area.

DC: We've seen some newspaper articles recently, particularly one in the Sacramento Bee, where you're quoted on the subject of chiropractic pediatrics. Is it part of your mission to be accessible to the media, that is, do you make the effort to contact the media to talk about these issues?

Dr. Duvall: I have never made any effort what so ever to any media to try and give them my opinion on anything. I have sought out by various media to ask my opinion in certain areas: questionable techniques, efficacy of certain forms of treatment, most recently about the chiropractic surge into the pediatric area. I have given my opinion based upon scientific medical data that is presently at hand, and known fact. Concerning the article in the Sacramento Bee, I did conduct lengthy interviews with the reporter by phone, but I have not seen the article.

DC: In the Sacramento Bee article, it stated that you're the president of the National Assoc. for

Chiropractic Medicine. Is that correct?

Dr. Duvall: Correct.

DC: What is the goal of the NACM?

Dr. Duvall: In a nutshell, what the NACM is seeking to bring the chiropractic profession into the mainstream area of medical science. It is known and can be shown that spinal manipulation is an efficacious and therapeutic form of treatment for neuromusculoskeletal conditions of neuromusculoskeletal origin. We are not saying that at some time with the proper research that it could be shown that spinal manipulation may in fact help correct or be of benefit with other types of problems. But until such data is forthcoming, we cannot rely on anecdote, supposition, innuendo, or just because it works -- we can't do that anymore.

DC: In most of the reports that have been given either on TV or in the papers concerning chiropractic pediatrics, the conflict between what science requires and testimonials of the parents, or the children themselves, is brought out. How would you respond to those parents and particularly those DCs who suggest that it's more important to treat the patient now and wait for the research to catch up later?

Dr. Duvall: I have trouble with that when you're looking at areas where chiropractors are trying to infer that they can treat specific diseases or organ problems like muscular dystrophy, which was on TV today (NBC Today show), when it can be shown that this is in fact a genetic problem, and where his treatment form (stressology) says that it's (muscular dystrophy) is psychosomatic, and this is the way your body manifests it. That's utter nonsense. Many times you have to look at what the chiropractor says he's treating. I've seen them say they can treat everything from cancer to cross-eyes. All I've ever seen is anecdote on certain areas -- they feel better. Feel better doesn't mean anything. Like the little boy with MS. Yes he feels better, but it's not doing anything to the MS, although they're (the parents) are being led to believe that it is.

DC: There seems to be a small surge in chiropractic to attempt to address problems that have a psychosomatic component, Network Chiropractic, for instance. How do you respond to that?

Dr. Duvall: They're are those out there who think they can heal you by clicking something over the phone or treating rocks or shadows. Again, I think that has no place at all in the medical, scientific area of being a physician. If you want to put yourself out to be a witch doctor, or start your own cult, fine, but we as chiropractic physicians do not have extensive training either in psychiatry or psychological areas.

DC: Would you like to add anything?

Dr. Duvall: I would just hope that the chiropractic profession would get their act together and direct themselves away from the shenanigans that are being proliferated to making money quick, and thinking you can treat everything else and concentrate on being the best type of musculoskeletal specialist that there is, that is recognized even by the government.

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