

## FBI Health Fraud Conference Looks at Chiropractic

D. BRENT OWENS, DC, ANNOUNCES FORMATION OF FCLB CHIROPRACTIC HEALTH CARE FRAUD TASK FORCE

Editorial Staff

TEMPE, Arizona -- Just looking at the names of the law enforcement agencies listed at the registration desk for the FBI hosted Advanced Health Fraud Regional Training Conference August 30-September 2, was impressive.

It was startling to learn how many different federal and state law enforcement agencies are involved in the investigation of health care fraud. The acronyms of many of the agencies were reminiscent of alphabet soup. Most of the agencies would be unrecognizable to the public.

A second conference on the same subject was also scheduled at the FBI training center in Quantico, Virginia the following week.

Chiropractic was represented by D. Brent Owens, DC, immediate past president of the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards (FCLB), and Carroll Winkler, DC, president of the FCLB.

The conference began with the presentation, "Case Study -- Chiropractic Fraud," by Sheila Madden, assistant Arizona attorney general. Attorney Madden stated that chiropractors were involved in two main areas of health care fraud:

Unlicensed Practice of Medicine: practicing outside the chiropractic scope of practice. She included examples of the disastrous results when DCs perform everything from lyposuction to abortions.

Insurance Fraud: Medicare, personal injury, and automobile accident related fraudulent activity. She specified that a "...large majority of chiropractic fraud cases arise from car accidents."

In 1990, according to Ms. Madden, 28 percent of insurance fraud was committed by professionals (medical doctors, chiropractors, attorneys, etc.). Ms. Madden further stated that while chiropractic fraud was difficult to investigate and prosecute, undercover operations and wiretaps were considered the most effective tools for that effort. She further encouraged the use of RICO (racketeering) statutes and grand juries.

Immediately following Ms. Madden's presentation, D. Brent Owens, DC, took to the podium. He educated the audience of FBI and other law enforcement agents with many facts concerning the chiropractic profession.

Dr. Owens did not try to deny the existence of health fraud within the chiropractic profession. What's more, he announced the formation of the FCLB's Chiropractic Health Care Fraud Task Force, and presented options for the state and federal agencies to work with chiropractic licensing boards in their investigations.

Dr. Owens offered, as chairman of the Chiropractic Health Fraud Task Force, to work with any agency on any investigation they may be conducting. He made it clear that the FCLB would be cooperating not only in investigations, but also in disseminating information to deter those who might consider becoming involved in health care fraud.

When asked about the formation of the Chiropractic Health Care Fraud Task Force, Carroll Winkler, DC, president of the FCLB stated:

"This is a very, very important function for us to perform. In my opinion, one of the most important challenges facing the profession is the one to three percent of fraud in chiropractic. If we are going to maintain our credibility, we are going to have to eliminate the fraud in our profession."

SEPTEMBER 1993