

Coalition Sets Health Care Reform Strategies

Editorial Staff

The nation's chiropractic colleges have rung the bell for another round of phone calls, letters, faxes and personal contacts to persuade lawmakers to include chiropractic in health care reform.

The Coalition for Chiropractic Inclusion in National Health Care Reform, meeting Oct. 14 in Washington, D.C., nailed down three strategies in response to President Clinton's proposal to revamp the country's health care system. Representatives of major chiropractic organizations also attended.

"Now that we have the Clinton plan in full view," said Michael Crawford, chairman of the Coalition, "we can focus on what to say to those who will write health care reform into law. Now that they are working on the actual legislation, we must generate a greater sense of urgency about our task."

According to Mr. Crawford, here's what the chiropractic colleges will do in the next few months:

First, each college will ask its alumni, patients of alumni, faculty, staff and students to contact their congressmen and senators requesting:

1. any health care reform measures specifically include chiropractic care
2. all patients be allowed freedom to choose chiropractic care
3. anti-discrimination language be adopted to ensure that no health care profession is discriminated against
4. legislation include "any willing provider" in at least one of the health care options for consumers, preventing any state-licensed practitioner from being left out of the system altogether.

Each college will try to make sure that the two senators in its home state support the chiropractic cause. The colleges will host senators on campus or have "fly-in" meetings where patients or doctors meet with the senators or key staff members. Where there is more than one chiropractic college in a state, the colleges will coordinate their efforts.

Each college will contact the US representative in its home district and other congressman from that state with key roles affecting passage of health care legislation. Again, chiropractic colleges in the same state will work together.

"We believe personal contacts must be made in multiple visits by multiple groups," Mr. Crawford said. "We need to be, and appear to be, well organized."

"These efforts are in conjunction with, not substitution for, activities by professional organizations

like the ICA and the ACA or the involvement of individual practitioners," Mr. Crawford said. "From the beginning the Coalition's objective has been to mobilize the chiropractic colleges and serve as an informational liaison between the various groups. However, with the game on the line, everybody in the profession has to get involved and energetic. It's time for a full-court press."

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