

The Dawning of a New Era for Chiropractic

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The Wilk et al. lawsuit is over. The AMA is paying not only the attorneys' fees, but will be paying out additional monies that will ultimately be used for furthering chiropractic education and research.

The RAND study is only partially completed, but has already yielded national exposure in newspapers (including the New York Times), magazines (Time et al.), and on television (with the "20/20" segment still to come). The final two parts of the RAND study have the potential to accomplish much more.

The Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) has established its first panel to address back disorders. According to panel Chairman Stan Bigos, M.D., the goal of the expert panel process is to produce federally mandated guidelines for the treatment of low back pain. Chiropractic has two representatives on this panel: Scott Haldeman, D.C., M.D., Ph.D., and John Triano, M.A., D.C.

The chiropractic profession has just developed its own practice guidelines from the Mercy Center Conference (please see "Consensus Works!" on the front page of this issue). While these guidelines will need to be continually refined and expanded, they were established by the chiropractic profession for chiropractors, not by an outside agency or third party payer.

National health care is almost a certainty in the near future. There are currently more than 40 bills before Congress proposing some form of national health care reform. In addition, the bill to commission doctors of chiropractic in the military is expected to be considered for a hearing by the Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee this year (please see "Subcommittee Hearing on H.R. 608 Anticipated" on page 39).

This and much more is happening, almost faster than we can report it. The current dynamic health care environment emphatically calls for more than "business as usual" from the chiropractic profession.

This is quite clearly the beginning of a new era. The issues are changing. The focus of chiropractic's meager resources is being redefined. Many of the "heros" of yesterday are giving way to the "new breed."

Chiropractic's new era is not happening by force or political warfare. It is taking place because YOU are insisting on a clear, concise agenda for chiropractic as it confronts the new and very real challenges of tomorrow. How we respond to these challenges will determine whether chiropractic care is vaulted into the limelight or cast into the shadows.

Unity is continuing to be at the top of the agenda for no other reason than survival and prosperity. When unity is not possible, consensus has become mandatory. Those who consistently refuse to become involved in these processes are under close scrutiny by the profession. All self-serving motives are becoming obvious, especially those who continually seek to replicate every effort in their own image.

The days of non-involvement are over. The issues are too important, the opposition is too powerful, and the stakes are too high.

Those who watched the movie "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" will never forget Cameron, the hypochondriac who was always afraid to do anything. Cameron had spent so long living a life in which he was powerless, that he truly believed he could do nothing to control his own future. Finally, after experiencing the freedom of a day with Ferris Bueller (and just before he destroys the symbol of his father's oppression -- a sports car), Cameron comes to a very profound realization and makes an important decision:

"I am not going to sit on my ass as the events that affect me unfold to determine the course of my life. I'm going to take a stand!"

Our oppressors have been brought to their knees. The choke hold of the AMA has been destroyed.

There is now just one question You must ask yourself:

Are you sitting..... or have you chosen to take that stand?

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FEBRUARY 1992