

A Call to Arms

ARE THEY STUPID, BLINDLY PREJUDICED, OR FRAUDULENT?

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The AMA's 434-member House of Delegates met in Chicago on June 21-25, for their 141st biannual meeting. Among the many things on their agenda was Resolution #537, submitted by Louis Alfano, M.D., a delegate for the American Society of Abdominal Surgery. It requested that the National Institutes of Health "conduct a study of the efficacy of chiropractic in the treatment of hypertension and other human ailments." Conspicuously missing from its list of ailments was any reference to musculoskeletal ailments, headaches or asthma. Perhaps he may have conceded that chiropractic has more than proven itself in this area.

Whatever the case may have been, the resolution was taken to a vote and it was defeated by the 434 AMA delegates.

For decades, the AMA has attacked chiropractic as quackery, unscientific, invalid, a hoax upon the public, etc., and now when it has a chance to vote for a resolution, which would ask the National Institutes of Health to do a study to evaluate the efficacy of chiropractic, the AMA delegates voted it down. Why? Don't they seek the truth?

There is no reasonable, rational or logical excuse or justification that the AMA delegates can possibly come up with to justify their conduct other than a selfish and self-serving one. What could be more logical or honorable on the part of genuine physicians wanting the government to do an objective study on chiropractic and then let the facts speak for themselves? Certainly chiropractors would welcome such objective evaluation with open arms. It appears that the AMA delegates fear the truth and would rather thrive on misinformation. The rejection of resolution #537 is a despicable and bigoted act which reflects contempt for honest evaluation and truth. It appears as though the delegates would rather wallow in the gutter of ignorance, prejudice, and misinformation.

The rejection of this resolution must now be publicly exposed and condemned for its self-serving policy. Every dedicated chiropractor should make it a personal commitment to either send a letter (perhaps with this article) to their local radio and TV commentators, newspapers, and legislators. We cannot allow the AMA to get away with such outrageous acts and not be held accountable for them.

We are living in an era where this country's economy is in serious trouble, and the health care system is one of the major reasons for it. The current health delivery system looms over our heads like an ugly and insensitive monster ready to destroy individuals, families, and businesses. Personal bankruptcies in 1991, in the amount of 112,000, can be attributed to some extent to illness, injury or accident, according to the Consumer Bankruptcy Project, a study of people who go bankrupt. It is already a major cause of bankruptcy of small businesses which make up the fiber of our nation's work force. The problem is that an increasing number of small companies cannot afford to pay the soaring health care insurance premiums for their employees, and it forces them out of business. Hence, the impact on our nation's economic welfare becomes obvious.

Legislators are telling us that our health delivery system is heading for a "melt down" because of soaring insurance premium costs. This will push us into national health care which will simply be replacing one disaster with another; that is unless the public and the politicians see the light and demand that the health care system be utilized more honestly and intelligently.

This is not an issue of chiropractic vs. medicine. It is absurd to even remotely suggest that it is. Rather, this is a case of plain common horse sense and utilizing whatever method of health care works better, is safer, and is therapeutically more cost effective. It is also an issue of whether the AMA or the politicians in this country have the courage, foresight, and integrity to see the truth, because health care is not being intelligently, objectively, and honestly utilized. It is far too partisan, biased, polarized, and self-serving, and it is a major contributor to our nation's economic woes. Let's look at some hard facts from some very reliable sources and let them speak for themselves.

For example, when a study was conducted at the University of Saskatchewan by some prominent physicians and researchers, 171 chronic backache sufferers for seven long years were corrected within two to three weeks under chiropractic care, and they remained well when re-evaluated one year later (David Cassidy, D.C., and Kirkaldy-Willis, M.D.). Meanwhile, where was the medical community all of this time? Pretending it never happened? Looking the other way? How calloused or indifferent can physicians be? Reasonable physicians should have embraced this method. Can they be so stupid or is it just plain blind prejudice and greed to the extent of being fraud or malpractice?

Here is another example. Dr. Per Freitag, one of Chicago's leading medical orthopedists, testified in our court case as an expert witness noting that chiropractically treated patients at one Chicago hospital orthopedic ward were being released seven to nine days sooner than in another hospital not using chiropractic care. He testified that chiropractic made the difference in quicker recoveries. Seven to nine days sooner is a huge difference, especially if you project the numbers to the thousands of hospitals in America. (Involved in this comparison was the former Northwest Hospital in Chicago and Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois.) Yet this has not fazed the medical hospital or its physicians. Why? In spite of this, it remains "business as usual," with chiropractic isolated from all but a few notable hospitals. By the way, in the few hospitals where chiropractic is being utilized, it is working fine.

In another study conducted on chiropractic at the largest HMO in the southeastern part of the United States (AV MED), the HMO sent 100 test cases of medically unresponsive patients to a local chiropractor and recorded the results. Within three weeks, the corrected 86 percent of their ailments and eliminated 12 out of 12 previously medically diagnosed cases as needing back surgery. The MD doing the study conceded that the chiropractor saved AV MED \$250,000 plus unmeasurable suffering, pain, and other complications of major surgery (Mark Silverman, D.C., Herbert Davis, M.D., 1982).

When we objectively look at the results of the Canadian study, the testimony of Dr. Per Freitag, and of AV MED, we ask ourselves just what does it take to make people see the truth? Must the entire sky fall down on their heads before they will recognize the obvious? And again we ask ourselves: Are the AMA delegates so blindly prejudiced, outright stupid, or plainly fraudulent? Their most recent act of rejecting honest evaluation, investigation, and truth reflects the kind of morally unresponsive and decadent health delivery system that is undermining our nation's welfare.

When the U.S. Office of Public Health completed a 13-year study on drugs in 1986, it found that two-thirds of the OTC drugs do not do what the drug companies claim. When Harvard University completed a five-year study in 1990 in New York State, it found that medical negligence was

rampant, with 99,000 injuries and losses of \$894,000,000 in one year. When the Yale-New Haven Hospital conducted a study, it found that medications could be causing from 100,000 to 200,000 deaths a year.

These findings from the most respected universities in America are clearly telling us that our nation had better wake up and see the light. The system needs major reform -- a move toward chiropractic -- which could be like a glowing and warm light within a cold and often ill-conducted health care delivery system.

These are just a couple of examples, but there are too many others to cover within our limited space.

We have a lot of ammunition that we can take to the media and the legislators, but if we don't do it, who will?

I realize that I have harped on this for years, to where it may sound like a "broken record," but I will continue to do so because of its importance. The recent AMA rejection of a resolution devoted to simply searching for the truth should outrage every chiropractor in the land. Truth is our greatest weapon and we have it on our side. But if we don't take advantage of it, then we are failing our profession and the patients it could serve. The best way is on a grassroots level. Learn the facts and how to communicate them effectively and take them to the media and legislators. This will get the needed job done.

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