

Not the Same Profession, Not the Same Situation

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In the world of economics, there is always one standard assumption that is applied to every equation, which is: "all things remaining the same." This is a bit comical in that everyone knows nothing ever stays the same in real world economics.

The same holds true for the chiropractic profession, this year perhaps more than any other. The profession is advancing in an environment where everything that once was is either about to change or just did.

One of the tasks undertaken by the editorial staff of Dynamic Chiropractic is to subscribe to and monitor the American Medical News. This allows us to keep an eye on the medical profession and to learn from their attempts to solve many of the problems that the chiropractic profession also faces. This has been the history of chiropractic since its inception: benefiting from the mistakes of medicine.

Organized medicine (an obvious contradiction in terms) is going crazy. The world that they thought they could control is now attempting to control them. Take for example the last several issues of the American Medical News that sported these headlines:

"(Medical) Schools Fear Pinch on Research Dollars"

"Hospitals, Labor Unions Compete for Worker Loyalty"

"The Fight on RBRVS* Rules -- Medicine Gears for Battle Against 16% Cut in Pay"

"Doctors to See More 'Whistle-Blower' Suits"

"Pennsylvania Hospitals Facing Fights Over Tax-Exempt Status"

*Resource Based Relative Value Scales (RBRVS) are the new guidelines for how Medicare reimbursements will be made (please see "RBRVS -- How Will It Effect You?" in the March 1, 1991 issue).

Our situation is changing just as radically. In the media, in the pages of "DC," from your state and national association and in your own situation, you can see what is currently impacting your practice and what will soon be taking its toll.

Are we ready to meet these new challenges? Or will we be overwhelmed by them?

Fortunately, we are not the same profession. We have grown and evolved in an effort to survive and succeed. But are we still trying to use outdated thinking to address today's problems?

Many times, a phone call with a chiropractor (or chiropractic student) has left me with the feeling that the person on the other end was as much as ten years behind in their thinking. It was obvious

that little attention was paid to the problems at hand ("That's the job of the associations!") Occasionally, the comment is made: "Why can't we go back to the good old days of chiropractic?"

Going back to "good old chiropractic" is similar to trying to fight the battles in Iraq with the weapons of the civil war. It is so completely out of context as to be laughable.

We are fighting for our economic survival. Today's weapons are research, strong legal force, and political savvy. Chiropractic philosophy (which is very important to the life of our profession) will not make converts of insurance companies or legislators. We might as well just say, "Chiropractic works!"

As you look at the actions of your state and national association leaders, ask yourself: "Are these the actions that will most effectively address today's issues?" (Of course, you have to be aware of today's issues in order to ask the question.) If the proposed solutions are using yesterday's rhetoric, they may be ineffectual or possibly harmful.

In a world that is changing so dramatically, there are great opportunities. Small professions can become larger, big professions can become smaller, unaware professions can become extinct. (Don't kid yourself, a few pieces of congressional legislation could wipe us out.)

This is why your involvement on a state and national level is more important now than ever before. But you aren't any good to the profession if you don't understand what is happening! You will find yourself resembling a basketball player on a football field. You will only feel comfortable standing on the sidelines with the other basketball players, hockey players, etc.

Information applied correctly is the most important weapon in today's battles for the chiropractic profession. This has been demonstrated time and again by practicing chiropractors, like yourself, taking information about new research or the Wilk et al. trial and applying it in their local communities.

Ignorance kills, leaving you defenseless before other health care professionals; forcing you to speak to your patients in concepts you can't support and ultimately causes you to miss opportunities to better your position and respect within your own community.

Don't be ignorant, take the time to keep informed. Read about what's happening, ask your state and national associations for information on the issues that concern you and spend some of your time trying to make your little corner of the world a better place to be a chiropractor.

Be a part of the changing profession that you love.

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