

Taking Chiropractic to the Next Level: Talking to Consumers

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As stated in my Jan. 1 column, *Dynamic Chiropractic* will be focusing on what various members of our profession are doing to take chiropractic to the "next level."¹ Our first example appeared in the last issue. Doctors of chiropractic from six different New Jersey state chiropractic associations worked out their differences and created a structure for unity.² While only four of the six associations merged, the other two still made the commitment to unified action. These courageous DCs are proving every day that unity can and will work.

Another area where we can take chiropractic to the next level is public education. For far too long, chiropractic has been talking to itself and wondering why no one else was listening. And while there have been several attempts to educate the public, few have enjoyed sustained efforts.

Parker Seminars has made the commitment to have a patient education program at each of their programs, beginning with their 2005 Parker Seminar in Las Vegas this month. Parker College President, Fabrizio Mancini, DC, explains his vision:

"(The idea is) to empower our patients to advance our profession. From Las Vegas on, Parker Seminars will have a patient night that will be free to educate patients in healthy living. In Las Vegas, we have experts in the different fields to guide patients in the realization that they must consider chiropractic as part of their daily choices. We have all of the speakers - strong chiropractic advocates. The initiative is through the governor's office or the mayor's office. This will bring credibility and the media. Our objective is to get patients in chiropractic offices by inviting them into our environment. Las Vegas is the kick-off."

This concept is not new. A number of other organizations have done similar patient nights, most notably the New York Chiropractic Council,³ but there has never been a sustained national effort that I am aware of.

The concept is fairly simple. Any seminar program that is renting meeting space in a large hotel can easily negotiate an additional night, particularly if it is not a Friday or Saturday. The program can be short, less than two hours. The content should focus on the health care consumer and their needs. Local doctors of chiropractic can be included in publicizing the event. If the program is focused on wellness, local radio stations can be approached to run spots for the free event.

In the case of Parker Seminars, they are offering a Wednesday night event entitled "Healthy Living." The program features nine speakers presenting information on wellness, fitness, nutrition, self-esteem, chiropractic, obesity, life without limits, and action steps. They are encouraging doctors to invite their patients and encouraging them to bring others.

This will be part of the Parker Seminar program in various cities across the country. Dr. Mancini has a clear understanding of the need to educate the public. He is taking the message to the consumer.

There is no reason why Parker Seminars has to be the only chiropractic organization reaching the public. Every chiropractic association and seminar company should examine their program to see how they can include a time to educate the local community.

Imagine what we could accomplish in just one year if every chiropractic seminar included a 1-2 hour patient education program. According to our Online Chiropractic Calendar (<http://calendar.chiroweb.com/mpacalendar/>), there are well over 100 chiropractic seminars each month in the United States alone. If each of these could reach just 100 consumers, we could impact more than 100,000 prospective patients each year, not to mention the people they communicate with.

This should be a mandate for every chiropractic state association. Increasing the chiropractic patient base within their state should certainly be among their top priorities. There is no reason not to extend their programs to include their public.

This is an incredible opportunity if only we will take advantage of it. Parker Seminars is setting the example.

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References

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