

## A Chiropractic Treatment Room at the Oregon State Capitol Building!

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One year ago this April, the Legislative Administration Committee officially approved the "Chiropractor of the Day," an exciting new program at the Oregon state Capitol building in Salem. There is now a chiropractic treatment room in the building that will allow Oregon chiropractors to treat state senators, representatives and their staff during legislative sessions. This program represents two years of work and cooperation between the Chiropractic Association of Oregon and the Oregon Doctors of Chiropractic. The treatment room has been equipped with nearly \$8,000 in state-of-the-art chiropractic equipment, thanks to the donations of several national chiropractic equipment vendors.

### How Did We Do It?

Several years ago, while having lunch in our nation's capital with Dr. Bill Dallas, who was at the time, president of Western States Chiropractic College, we got on the subject of the need to have a strong political grassroots network within one's state. During this conversation, he told me how during the late 1960s in Washington state, when he was the lobbyist for the state association, the chiropractic profession had a beautiful treatment room in the state Capitol building, just off the Senate chamber. Dr. Dallas went on to say how wonderful the public relations were with this program, how the chiropractic treatment room was far nicer than what the medical physicians had, and how the medical association was actually very jealous of the chiropractic room. So, I thought, why not Oregon?

I first scheduled a luncheon with Ms. Judy Hall, who is the Secretary of the Oregon Senate and who has administered the "Doctor of the Day" program, specifically controlled by the Oregon Medical Association, for over 20 years. I met with her to see how to set up a separate and distinct chiropractic official Capitol program. Ms. Hall simply indicated that any doctor, not just medical doctors, could be involved and be a Doctor of the Day. I told her that I had been so designated in 1981 and was actually the first chiropractor to be the doctor of the day under the Oregon Medical Association's program. I sat with then-Rep. Mae Yih on the House floor as I was acknowledged.

When I told Ms. Hall that we wanted a separate and distinct chiropractic program with a chiropractic treatment room, she said she was not sure that would work, but that I should speak with the Capitol Administrator, Dave Henderson. I arranged to speak with Mr. Henderson, a very nice gentleman, but again got what I considered to be the "Capitol staff two-step shuffle." Mr. Henderson said something to the effect of, "Well, you know, Vern, if we were to put a chiropractic treatment table in that room, we would probably then have to have an osteopathic table, an acupuncture table, one for physical therapists, one for massage therapists, etc."

I conveyed this message to our lobbyist and he said, "Vern, those staffers take their direction from the Legislative Administration Committee, co-chaired by the Senate president and Speaker of the House. The Speaker and the Senate President are where we need to go." This reinforced to me the critical need for any chiropractic organization to have a professional lobbyist on board. I had never

heard of the "Legislative Administration Committee."

Our lobbyist and I next met with the Speaker of the House and the Senate President, our lobbyist having a long positive relationship with the Senate President and I, through extensive grassroots work, and a strong relationship with the Speaker. Both the Speaker of the House and the Senate President approved of our proposal. We next approached each member of the committee, each of whom gave their support for our program.

On April 6, 2004, I testified in front of the committee and the program was subsequently approved. It was the first item on the agenda. The Secretary of the Senate first gave an interesting short history of the original Doctor of the Day program controlled by the medical association. I then testified and described the chiropractic proposal.

### Getting Started

To get the program going, we first sent out a statewide survey to all licensed doctors of chiropractic in Oregon, regardless of which state association they belonged to, or even if they belonged to neither. Our philosophy was that our state associations would work together for the good of the profession, while at the same time, hopefully stimulating nonmembers to get involved. The Chiropractic Association of Oregon and the Oregon Doctors of Chiropractic hoped that by getting involved and experiencing the good works of this program, these nonmember doctors might become members of one of their trade organizations, thereby getting more involved politically. This philosophy is working. We have doctors from all over the state signing up to become a Chiropractor of the Day.

### Make It Official

It is my opinion that states wishing to develop a similar program should attempt to make their Chiropractor of the Day an official Capitol program. This will likely require gaining approval from a legislative committee, similar to Oregon's Legislative Administration Committee. There are a number of reasons why this is recommended. As an official state Capitol program, the profession is likely to gain more notoriety. One of the more powerful and beneficial aspects of this program is that the chiropractic colleague who is the Chiropractor of the Day will have his or her name announced in both the Senate and House chambers at the start of each day's session. For example, the Senate President and Speaker of the House will announce from their podiums, "The chiropractor of the day today is Dr. Vern Saboe from Albany, Oregon. We thank Dr. Saboe for being here today. If any member or staff is in need of a chiropractic adjustment or consultation, you may page Dr. Saboe at (number)."

Most importantly, there will be colleagues in your state who currently treat a senator or representative, and may request the opportunity to sit next to that member when announced as the "Chiropractor of the Day." They, of course, stand to be acknowledged when announced. However, even more significant than this is that your senator or representative can then stand and address the assembly, telling how you are their chiropractor and how chiropractic care has helped them. Every senator or representative in that chamber who has never been to a chiropractor will hear these testimonials - you simply can't buy that kind of public relations! In the Oregon legislature, such testimonials are given during what is referred to as "remonstrances." For this obvious reason, we also specifically target the involvement of those chiropractic colleagues who currently treat members of the Oregon legislature.

You will need to research what your state's Senate and House rules will allow. In Oregon, we have the opportunity to sit with our senators if they invite us. Not so in the House, where we must sit on

the side aisle during the session, and when announced, simply walk to the chamber rail and wave to be acknowledged. In each state, there will be specific staff who are the experts on each chamber's rules. In Oregon, they are the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk.

#### Other Specifics of the Program

Other benefits of making our Oregon Chiropractor of the Day program official are that we have a special parking permit, worth platinum, that allows our doctors to park right at the Capitol steps. Additionally, those Doctors of the Day are given a pager to wear so that when a member or Capitol staff person wishes a treatment, they can page the doctor and arrange to be seen. We here in Oregon anticipate that this program will be extremely beneficial to the profession for years to come.

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