

Think Again! About Chiropractic's Maturity

Michael Flynn, DC

A common utterance from psychotherapists is, "You can blame your parents, your environment and conditions for your problems up to a certain point, but there comes a time in your life where you have to take responsibility for your own fate." As cold as that sounds, it is a reality that applies to people ... and professions.

There's no question that chiropractic has grown up in a negative environment. Chiropractic has been treated as the unwanted child in the health system. And yes, our profession has been under the stress of dealing with political medicine, which has tried to establish barriers to exclude us; arrogant legislators who have ignored us; shock-seeking journalists who have taken shots at us; and naïve consumers who have overlooked us. We have been excluded, snubbed and maligned. Many of us carry the scars of the injuries and pain our profession has experienced over the years. But at some point in our profession's life, we have to take responsibility for our fate and our own future.

After 110 years, it seems that it is time for our profession to say, "Hey, what happened in the past is the past. This is a new world. Now, I am big enough, mature enough, and independent enough to use the opportunities available to me to control my own destiny."

Consider, for example, the egregious billboard that was placed by some malicious group in New Haven, Connecticut. I am sure everyone has seen reprints of it or heard about it, because bad news travels fast. It boldly stated, "Warning: Chiropractic Adjustments Can Kill or Permanently Disable You."

While I can't help but think about the shock and anguish it caused our chiropractic peers and their families, and the embarrassment their children must have felt, I also wonder about the impact on ordinary citizens. Do they believe this? They might, if nobody says anything differently. Lies take life if no one steps up to confront them, rebut them and prove the truth.

This billboard (or worse) could come to a street in Anywhere USA if our adversaries have free reign to communicate their nasty, demeaning messages, without response - or better yet, a proactive campaign promoting the benefits of chiropractic care.

That's what the Campaign for Chiropractic is all about. It's a program to enable chiropractic's resources to fight bigotry, ignorance and misinformation through a mass communications program; to once and for all take control of what is said about us, read about us, and fed to the public about us. To improve our life.

The Foundation for Chiropractic Progress has come up with a program that is long overdue. It's something the profession has talked about in the past, but has never been able to put together, because there have been too many views on how it should be done.

At last, a nonprofit group of chiropractic leaders, representing a cross-section of all of chiropractic, has come together to endorse and implement a program that is nonpolitical, nonexclusive, and nondivisive. Its only goal is to benefit the profession - and every chiropractor's individuality. Its

objective is to raise the image of chiropractic, to identify with the consumer's health care needs, and to increase the utilization of the services of doctors of chiropractic.

When a person reaches maturity, he or she is expected to be more accountable, more reasonable, and more objective. This principle might be applied to a profession as well. The Campaign for Chiropractic puts us in a position to think about what it will take to turn the negatives around. It enables us to look around at the new society and see what methods, devices and tools are being used to influence a new generation of potential patients. Thinking clearly, we see it is marketing. And that is exactly what the Campaign for Chiropractic is all about: marketing chiropractic - aggressively, but professionally - with mass-media exposure.

Chiropractic has a choice. It can go on being weighed down by the hurt experienced by chiropractors during the past century, blaming organized medicine and the health system, or, we can do something to rectify the situation. If we have learned nothing else over the past 100 years, it should be, "Nobody is going to do it for us if we don't do it for ourselves."

I urge every doctor of chiropractic, every chiropractic association, every chiropractic student, and every producer and supplier of chiropractic products to join in this outstanding Campaign for Chiropractic.

Let's accept the responsibilities and enjoy the opportunities of maturity.

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Editor's note: For further information on the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress and its Campaign for Chiropractic, please send an e-mail to gveno@foundation4cp.com.

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