

Unanimous Agreement on the Identity of the Profession

"HISTORIC MILESTONE" ACHIEVED AT WFC CONGRESS IN SYDNEY

Dynamic Chiropractic Staff

The World Federation of Chiropractic's 8th Biennial Congress produced a historic milestone for the chiropractic profession worldwide: unanimous agreement on the most appropriate public identity for the chiropractic profession within health care. The agreed-upon public identity is as "the spinal health care experts in the health care system," supported by several other important concepts.

Over 100 delegates and observers from national associations in 36 countries, including both the American Chiropractic Association and the International Chiropractors Association, were present on June 15, 2005, when the WFC Assembly voted to accept the recommendations of the 40-person WFC Task Force on Identity. The report, completed in April 2005, was based on two years of intensive work, including a grassroots electronic survey of chiropractors worldwide conducted in October 2004. It was presented to the WFC Assembly by Drs. Paul Carey (Canada), Gerard Clum (USA) and Peter Dixon (UK), co-chairs of the task force.

"There are several important parts to the overall identity approved by the WFC membership," explained Dr. Anthony Metcalfe, WFC president, "and it is important to read the full Task Force Report to understand the background and what has been decided."

The report compiled by the task force is available at www.wfc.org, under the "Identity Consultation" tab. Recommendations, now accepted, include the following:

1. International Identity. The public identity of the chiropractic profession, if it is to be effective and successful, should be similar in all countries.
2. Three Concepts. This identity should be established and maintained through the use of the following three linked concepts:
 1. A leading statement on identity, which must be clear, concise and immediately relevant to both the public and the profession - the "pole" (brand platform).
 2. Several important qualifying statements, which provide the necessary context and foundation for the pole - the "ground" (brand pillars).
 3. A description of the qualities or essential personality of chiropractors - the "personality" (tone).
3. The Pole. The "pole" should be: "The spinal health care experts in the health care system."
4. The Ground. The "ground" should consist of the following:
 1. Ability to improve function in the neuromusculoskeletal system, as well as overall health, well-being and quality of life.
 2. Specialized approach to examination, diagnosis and treatment, based on best available research and clinical evidence, and with particular emphasis on the relationship between the spine and the nervous system.
 3. Tradition of effectiveness and patient satisfaction.
 4. Without use of drugs and surgery, enabling patients to avoid these whenever possible.
 5. Expertly qualified providers of spinal adjustment, manipulation and other manual treatments; exercise instruction; and patient education.
 6. Collaboration with other health professionals.

7. A patient-centered and biopsychosocial approach, emphasizing the mind/body relationship in health, the self-healing powers of the individual, individual responsibility for health, and encouraging patient independence.
5. The Personality. The "personality" should be a combination of: expert, professional, ethical, knowledgeable; and accessible, caring, human, positive.
6. The WFC's Role. The primary role of the WFC should be to communicate and promote this identity, not implementation within individual countries.
7. Communication Program. Acceptance and establishment of the identity will not be possible without a planned and ongoing WFC program of communication, including the use of Web sites, electronic and print articles, and multimedia presentations at meetings.
8. The Role of Member Associations. The role of national associations of chiropractors within their respective countries should be to implement the identity. This should be accomplished through a branding exercise, development of a communications program within the profession and with the public, and through alignment of all association activities and programs with the public identity.

"Complete agreement on public identity, from all sectors of the profession worldwide, is a real milestone," commented Dr. Carey, a past president of both the WFC and the Canadian Chiropractic Association. "But this is just the first step. There must now be wider acceptance and implementation in each country, and if that happens successfully, the chiropractic profession will at last benefit from a clear, consistent and effective identity within health care, and the Sydney vote will be truly historic."

"Many have observed that the chiropractic profession lacks a clear identity, stands at the crossroads of mainstream and alternative care without a clear path forward, and that this represents a major problem for the profession," noted Dr. Clum, president of Life Chiropractic College West and 1st vice president of the WFC Council. "The identity just voted [on] can solve that problem. It reflects the perspectives of both the profession and the public it serves. It is broader than management of back pain or musculoskeletal pain, which is an identity understood by the public but unacceptably narrow to the profession. It is more defined than wellness care, which the evidence shows us is an identity not understood by or effective with the public."

Approximately 850 chiropractors attended the main academic and social programs of the WFC Congress, held after the Assembly. The International Conference on Chiropractic Research (ICCR), jointly administered by the WFC and the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research (FCER), was a main aspect of the 2005 Congress. The ICCR featured platform and poster presentations of approximately 120 leading research projects, chosen from more than 180 submissions.

Major research awards, sponsored by the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners, went to noted chiropractic researchers:

- First Prize (*The Scott Haldeman Award*): "Spinal Manipulation Reduces Pain and Hyperalgesia Following Lumbar Intervertebral Foramen Inflammation in the Rat. Xue-Jun Song, MD, PhD; Ronald Rupert, DC, MS; et al. Parker College of Chiropractic, Dallas, Texas.
- Second Prize: "Spinal Manipulative Therapy (SMT) Reduces Inflammatory Cytokines but not Substance P Production in Normal Subjects." Julita Teodorczyk-Injeyan, PhD; Stephen Injeyan, PhD, DC; Richard Ruegg, PhD, DC. Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, Toronto, Canada.
- Third Prize: "Paraspinal Muscle Spindle Responses to the Duration of a Spinal Manipulation Under Force Control." Joel Pickar, DC, PhD; Yu-Ming Kang, PhD. Palmer College of

Chiropractic, Davenport, Iowa.

- Private Practice Award: "The Role of Functional Restoration and Chiropractic in a Multidisciplinary Approach to Chronic Spinal Pain." Nick Furse, BSc(Chiro), MChiro; Katrine Saeter, BSc, MChiro; Peter Tuchin, GradDipChiro, PhD. Sydney, Australia.

Several DCs were also honored with prestigious awards at the Saturday night (June 18) Gala Banquet, including Dr. Michael Pedigo, winner of the WFC Honour Award, given for outstanding services for the international advancement of the chiropractic profession. A 1969 Palmer College of Chiropractic graduate, Dr. Pedigo was one of the plaintiffs in the landmark *Wilk v American Medical Association* lawsuit, and has served as president of both the ACA and the ICA. Cheryl Hawk, DC, PhD, was also honored with the FCER Researcher of the Year award. [*Editor's note: For more information, read "Dr. Cheryl Hawk: FCER's 2005 Researcher of the Year" in the July 30, 2005 issue, News in Brief section.*]

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