

Chiropractic in the American Public Health Association

THE APHA AND THE CHIROPRACTIC PROFESSION: 10 YEARS AS FULL PARTNERS

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The American Public Health Association (APHA) is the oldest, largest, and most influential public health association in the United States - and in the world. For our chiropractic profession to be a part of this multidisciplinary organization is of major significance in terms of improving our profession's recognition and visibility, in addition to enhancing our communication and credibility with other health care professions and the public we serve. Consider the alternative: Where would we be if we were the only major health profession that was not part of the APHA?

This year, 2005, marks the 10th anniversary of the chiropractic group becoming a full-fledged section within the APHA structure. Prior to that, we had only been a Special Primary Interest Group. What is so special about a chiropractic section with APHA? And what have these 10 years meant to our profession within APHA and our potential for the future?

Over the past 10 years, since achieving full section status at the APHA Annual Meeting in San Diego in 1995, the Chiropractic Health Care Section has earned full equity and parity with the other health professions. Chiropractors have served on most of the APHA committees and held high offices within the APHA - even on the APHA Executive Board and its policy-making Governing Council. Our exhibit booths at APHA annual meetings have won awards, and our educational sessions have been widely acclaimed. As a section, we receive a budget and are allotted seats on the governing council and on important committees. Chiropractic is the only APHA section to have both "Health" and "Care" in its section name.

Leaders in government and health, in health education and research, and in other health disciplines have recognized our contributions. APHA is the vehicle by which our profession has achieved a much greater level of integration into mainstream health care in the U.S. At one time, we had no "seat at the table"; in fact, until 1983 chiropractic was labeled by the APHA as an "unscientific hazard to the health of American citizens," and an anti-chiropractic policy was widely disseminated to leaders in government and health, and to consumer groups. However, thanks to the efforts of the chiropractic leaders within the APHA, since 1983 the APHA has officially recognized chiropractic as "safe and effective for neuro-musculo-skeletal conditions and particularly for low back disorders." Our input is now sought and we participate in a variety of health care programs and projects at the community, state, national, and international levels, thanks to our recognized expertise and status through APHA. Where we were once excluded, we are now invited and welcomed.

The World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC) was accepted for membership in the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1993. A positive recommendation by the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) was a large part of the successful application by the WFC. In that recommendation letter, the contributions of the chiropractic leaders working within the APHA structure and forming the Chiropractic Health Care Section were cited as an example of how

modern chiropractic contributes to the health care system.

Chiropractic has had a major impact within the APHA, and our active participation has had a major impact on how chiropractic is perceived in America and the world. In fact, our work in the APHA is an important part of the history of the chiropractic profession. And we will continue to have impact through and within the APHA into the future.

Please join us as we celebrate our 10-year anniversary as a section during the APHA 133rd Annual Meeting and Exhibits in New Orleans, Louisiana, November 5-9, 2005. The meeting theme will be "Evidence Based Policy and Practice."

Note: The Chiropractic Health Care Section of the APHA is currently accepting new members and renewals of former members, and also appreciates volunteers to serve as elected officers and appointed committee members. For details, please contact Dr. John Hyland, section chair (drjhyland@optonline.net) or Dr. Andrew Isaacs, chair-elect and membership chair (arisaacs@aol.com), or visit the APHA Web site (www.apha.org).

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