

Think Again! About the Potential Chiropractic Is Missing!

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Every doctor of chiropractic has incredibly loyal patients who depend on chiropractic care to maintain their health. These chiropractic patients respect your knowledge and skills, and feel good after their adjustments.

Then there are those people who try chiropractic after a long bout of back or neck pain, usually as a last resort. A few might even be referred by a progressive-minded MD who isn't getting results with traditional medical attention - but that scenario is doubtful, because medical referrals are minimal.

It's more likely that the referral will come from a friend, a co-worker, family member or another person who has had the same problem and got relief from his or her chiropractor.

Despite what successful chiropractors may say, the sad fact is that the chiropractic profession is not anywhere near seeing the number of patients it could and should be seeing as a provider of quality health care. In fact, according to a recent survey, less than 50 million Americans (out of almost 300 million) have ever been to a chiropractor. (And even that number may be inflated!)

That leaves five times as many people - 250 million in the U.S. - who have never experienced chiropractic care. Imagine if only 10 percent of those people decided to visit a doctor of chiropractic. Doing so would increase the number of chiropractic patients by 25 million and increase every DC's patient base by over 400 patients!

If as much as 20 percent of the population that has never experienced chiropractic care were to go to a chiropractor, we wouldn't be able to handle it. And even that is just scratching the surface of potential. Now imagine what even a 20-percent increase would do for the profession's acceptance, the individual DC's income, our colleges' enrollments, and most importantly, the health of our nation. Bear in mind, even by doubling the number of people we see, chiropractors would still only be seeing about one-third of the people in the U.S.

If you only consider the extremely high number of back and neck problems suffered in modern society (not to mention the wellness potential), as well as the failures of medical and drug-related procedures, there's no reason chiropractic should not be getting a higher percentage of the market share. And this doesn't even take into consideration the many other types of health problems that respond effectively to chiropractic procedure.

While it appears trends are moving toward a consumer demand for natural health, chiropractic as a profession has not enjoyed the growth it deserves. Market research shows that one of chiropractic's weaknesses is that it lacks the unified thrust required to impact the health care marketplace, just as it lacks a message strong enough to identify with and influence health care decisions.

Now, let's think for a moment why we are not enjoying the public acceptance we deserve. Why

aren't we identifying with consumers as well as we should?

- Is it because we are not capable?
- Is it because chiropractic does not produce results?
- Is it because we charge too much?
- Is it because there is no need for chiropractic?
- Is it because the medical profession is doing such a good job of curing people?
- Is it because patients prefer the harmful effects of drugs and surgery?

The answer to all those questions is a big "No." So, there must be something else. What is it? The answer is that chiropractic simply has not marketed itself properly (if at all) to the public. As a result, it has limited acceptance and a minimal market compared with allopathic medicine.

The need is quite obvious. Chiropractic needs a marketing program that enables it to make consumers more aware of our abilities: what we do, how we do it, all the benefits, effectiveness, and more...

Chiropractic must identify with prospective patients' needs if we are to tap into the market potential waiting for us. And there is no reason we can't, if we decide once and for all to make up our minds to do it. But we can't afford to go on for years merely talking about it. We must do it. And do it now. The window of opportunity is closing quickly.

That's why I'm so supportive of the Campaign for Chiropractic, which has been organized by the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress, a nonprofit group. It is the foundation's intent to create top-of-the-mind public awareness with a national mass-media campaign. The plan involves organizing the profession's financial resources so as to have the strength to implement a promotional program equal to that used by successful national advertisers. The objective is to build our image, which will create more demand, and thus increase our market share.

Increased market share will translate into more patients for every chiropractor, more income for every office, and better health for every individual. It's a win-win situation for your profession, for new practitioners joining the profession, for our colleges, for suppliers to the profession, for your family - and for consumers.

I urge every chiropractor to think about the potential our profession is missing out on by allowing ourselves to sleep while the world seeks other alternatives. We are a sleeping giant that must awaken and take our future into our own hands. We must all join in the profession's first unified public awareness program. I've made my pledge, and I urge you to contribute as much as you can now.

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