

We Get Letters & E-Mail

A Unique Opportunity

Dear Editor:

We have all heard the term "honest politician." To most of us, this term represents the ultimate oxymoron, especially in Washington D.C. The old adage, "money talks and B.S. walks," has been proven factual in a recent scandal that has the potential to shake up the status quo in Washington for the next several years. One chiropractic lobbyist has pleaded guilty to fraud, bribery and a host of other charges in a plea bargain to reduce the prison sentence. This plea bargain has the potential to destroy long-standing political careers in Washington and disrupt the flow of influence peddling on Capitol Hill.

What does all this have to do with chiropractic? Everything! We have now been presented with a potential boon in which our historic lack of political funds may prove a blessing. There will be a short-lived backlash for deep-pocket special interests. This backlash will create an influence vacuum whereby chiropractic could present itself as the new leader of health care reform. The medical lobby represents extremely deep pockets and politicians will be shying away from this influence as a knee-jerk reaction to the scandal. As a result, we could push legislation based on principle and have a reasonable expectation to see it passed into law.

Perhaps my optimism is simplistic. We all know that money carries the weight of influence in Washington. At the moment, money and those who wield it are a source of fear for many powerful politicians in Washington. We should take advantage of this and push legislation that puts chiropractic on its own course and establishes our profession as separate and distinct from medicine. We can now force legislation through based on principles, now that politicians will be forced to prove to the public that they are truly "honest politicians." We as a united profession could carry significant principle-based influence.

We must act as one, however. This ACA-ICA infighting has got to stop. The mixer vs. straight fighting has got to stop. We all got into this profession to help people get better and stay better. There are those among us who I fear were planted by dubious associations to disrupt us; need I name those associations? The AMA once put in writing its intentions of "promoting disunity from within" The ACA talks a good fight, but it is the odd man out when it comes to working with the other chiropractic professional organizations. The coalition comes to mind here. We can work together and consolidate our position as a primary care provider, independent of MD approval.

I want chiropractic to be master of its destiny. I want chiropractors to be paid on par with MDs, if not paid more than MDs. I want insurance companies to change from "medical necessity" to "chiropractic necessity." We can achieve all this if we put aside the B.S. that has plagued us since D.D. and B.J. parted company. I can disagree with my brother on many issues and yet he remains my brother. We are brethren all cut from the same cloth. We are allowed to disagree, but let's do it in house and in private. Drop the name-calling and dirty politics. Let's lose the reputation of chiropractors eating our young. Unite as a strong, principled profession and kick the teeth out of those who have harmed us in the past. We can and will win; it's just a matter of getting past the

B.S.

Please listen to reason and not politics.

Richard L. Bend, DC
Monterey, California

"Chiropractor-Acupuncturists": What If the Tables Were Turned?

Dear Editor:

In reading about the formation of the American Chiropractic Association College of Chiropractic Acupuncture [March 12 issue; available online at www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/06/07.html], this paragraph piqued my interest: "It is important that we as a chiropractic profession protect our rights to utilize acupuncture treatments as an adjunct to chiropractic care. As a united group, we can defend our right to include acupuncture procedures if challenged. We believe all professions can and should work harmoniously."

"Chiropractor-acupuncturists" will be given diplomate status upon passing an exam after 300 hours of training, and will then claim the "right" to practice acupuncture. I would like to know how DCs would feel about licensed acupuncturists calling themselves "acupuncturist-chiropractors" after taking 300 hours of chiropractic training and passing an exam formulated by an acupuncture organization. I have a feeling not too many of us would be happy about that!

Exactly why do we have a right to legally practice acupuncture (and publicly call ourselves "acupuncturists") after 300 hours, when genuine acupuncturists take thousands of hours of training in theory and clinical practice? Acupuncture has a totally different theoretical basis than Western medicine, and I think it is arrogant for us to think we can claim to be acupuncturists after 300 hours, which is equivalent to about one semester of professional schooling!

I use a limited amount of acupoint therapy in my practice for musculoskeletal conditions (using low-level lasers and microcurrent stimulation), so I am not against DCs using meridian therapy adjunctively. But when you make a public claim to patients that you are a chiropractor-acupuncturist, it is misleading to say that acupuncture is only an adjunctive modality.

Asserting this false right is an insult to trained acupuncturists - and to chiropractors, too! Why do we have to try and claim we are something we are not, in order to protect a right we do not have, in order to maintain or expand our market share in complementary health care? When the tables are turned and others want to adjust their patients, we don't tolerate it from physical therapists (and now, osteopaths?), not to mention acupuncturists!

There is also the issue of whether diplomate status will be sufficient in particular states to legally allow chiropractors to practice and advertise themselves as acupuncturists. I don't believe that would be permitted here in Massachusetts, for instance.

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APRIL 2006

