

Serving Your Community During a Recession

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It's easy to skip over the latest unemployment figures, especially when they don't apply to you.

By the end of March, the unemployment level in the United States had reached its highest point in two-and-a-half years. But as we all know (when we stop to think about it), we are all dependent on each other.

This truth was demonstrated a few years ago when our church looked to build a larger facility in a neighboring city. The city fathers opposed the project, in part because of the potential increase in traffic on an already busy street. There was also some initial opposition from local business owners unconvinced that our church would contribute to their well-being. They assumed most of us drove in from other areas and returned without stopping along the way.

For three months, each person in the congregation left a small card at each restaurant, copier store, gift shop, etc. they visited. These cards were designed to let the business owners and their employees know that a member of our congregation had been shopping with them. By the end of the three months, each business knew (at least in financial terms) the value our church brought to the community. The employees recognized we had contributed to their salaries and tips. The business owners quickly changed their minds.

At the start of this year, almost a quarter of a million more people were out of work. And most prognosticators don't believe it will get better anytime soon. In addition to its other effects, our slowing economy negatively impacts the health of many families. Adults and children are suddenly without adequate health care. Depending on where you live, it may be impacting your community more than others. It is probably hitting some of your patients.

It's during times like these that we have an opportunity to stand out as health care professionals. While others will be involved in "business as usual," you have the choice to reach out to those less fortunate. It may be a single mom with kids who needs to maintain her children's health but is short on money. Or it could be an older man who finds himself unemployed at age 52 and isn't sure if he will be able to find another job.

If it hasn't happened already, soon you will be aware of people who need chiropractic care, but just can't afford it. It is at this point that you will have an opportunity to define the term *doctor of chiropractic* in a very meaningful way to someone who really needs chiropractic care. Please understand - this is not a suggestion that you neglect your family or your practice to help the unemployed. Chiropractic care has a value that should be maintained in the minds of the consumer. But it's during the tough times that you can serve people in need and help them appreciate chiropractic in a new way.

The core of chiropractic is about serving and caring for people. My dad demonstrated that to me over and over as I was growing up. You may not be able to impact this recession much, but you can impact the lives of the people who are being hurt by it. And as you do, you are setting an example for other health care providers to do the same. What you do for others does affect your future. I

can't tell you exactly how it works, but I know God never fails to reward people who make sacrifices for others.

Take the lead in your community by caring for those who have been hurt by our current economy. This recession won't last that long. But when it's over, your good deeds will still be paying dividends.

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