

Looking Back: 1993

Editorial Staff

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary as the definitive news and information source for the chiropractic profession, we look back at the important events as reported in DC since 1983, while also looking forward to the future. Throughout 2008, we will feature a review of the top headlines in chiropractic for a given year, along with an article on the future of chiropractic authored by an influential member of the profession.

January 1993: University of Quebec Introduces Chiropractic Program

Quebec Minister of Higher Education and Science Lucienne Robillard announced a five-year chiropractic program at the University of Quebec which will be taught in French. Students who complete the five-year program will receive a PhD in chiropractic, similar to doctoral programs in medicine.

The university will seek official recognition of the Council on Chiropractic Education for the new chiropractic program. The Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities will ensure courses taught under the new program will meet or exceed all standards set by the CCE in the U.S. and Canada. Tuition for chiropractic students will be the same as for other university students - \$1,200 per year.

The chiropractic doctoral program will automatically gain access to the university's research fund. In addition, Quebec chiropractors have set up their own research foundation and launched a public fundraising program. After only one month, the new foundation had already raised \$50,000.

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February 1993: AAA Settles Lawsuit Regarding Claims Payments to DCs

The American Automobile Association (AAA) of Northern California has agreed to a settlement of \$262,500 in *People v. California State Auto Insurance Bureau*. The suit and administrative law actions were brought in January 1991, by complaints from hundreds of chiropractors and consumers accusing the company of unreasonable delays of payment for medical claims.

As part of the settlement reached by the Department of Insurance, AAA will establish an ombudsman to field complaints of unfair claims handling. Additionally, AAA has promised to provide written guidelines to its medical claims adjusters to insure timely processing of claims. This marks a significant victory for the chiropractic profession, specifically for the California Chiropractic Association (CCA) and its determination to prevent unfair claims handling by insurance companies.

In another case, *Adams, et al. v. CSAA, et al.*, Gary Gwilliam, the former state president of the California Trial Lawyers Association, announced that a class-action lawsuit against AAA will enter

its third court hearing for punitive damages. It's anticipated this case will be brought in front of a San Francisco jury.

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September 1993: *Washington Post* Puts Chiropractic "Into the Mainstream"

The "Health" section of the Aug. 23, 1993 issue of the *Washington Post* contained the most comprehensive, well-balanced article yet to appear on chiropractic. The headline reads, "Chiropractors Come Into the Mainstream." The subheading cautions: "But Questions Remain About Treating Problems Other Than Back Pain."

Reporter Sarah Glazer began with an account of a woman who discovered relief from neck pain, and chronic ear and sinus infection through chiropractic adjustments. The article not only covers the issues surrounding spinal manipulation but also is reasonably clear about the diversity that is a part of the chiropractic profession.

While the article includes both positive and negative opinions of chiropractic, it presents a good assessment of how far the profession has come to now enter the mainstream.

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October 1993: Canadian Report Extols Benefits of Chiropractic

The Ministry of Health of Ontario has just released its commissioned report. The principal authors are two independent health economists: Professor Pran Manga, MA, PhD, director of the Health Administration program at the University of Ottawa, and Douglas Angus, adjunct professor of Health Economics at the University of Ottawa.

The executive summary lists 10 recommendations:

- Current policy discourages the utilization of chiropractic services for the management of LBP.
- Chiropractic services should be fully insured under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan, removing the economic disincentive for patients and referring health providers.
- Chiropractic services should be fully integrated into the health care system.
- Chiropractors should be employed by tertiary hospitals in Ontario.
- Hospital privileges should be extended to all chiropractors for the purposes of treatment of their own patients who have been hospitalized for other reasons, and for access to diagnostic facilities relevant to their scope of practice and patients' needs.
- Chiropractors should have access to all pertinent patient records and tests from hospitals, physicians, and other health care professionals upon the consent of their patients.
- Since low back pain is of such significant concern to workers' compensation, chiropractors should be engaged at a senior level by the Workers' Compensation Board to assess policy, procedures and treatment of workers with back injuries.
- The government should make the requisite research funds and resources available for further clinical evaluation of chiropractic management of LBP, and for further socio-economic and policy research concerning the management of LBP generally.
- Chiropractic education in Ontario should be in the multidisciplinary atmosphere of a university with appropriate public funding.
- Finally, the government should take all reasonable steps to actively encourage cooperation between providers, particularly the chiropractic, medical and physiotherapy professions.

The significance of the findings and recommendations are clear. This was not a study by chiropractors, but an independent, government-funded study conducted by respected health economists. The conclusions of these investigators were inescapable, given the current literature on LBP.

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November 1993: Congress Approves \$1.75 Million for Chiropractic Projects

On Oct. 21st, President Clinton signed into law the 1994 appropriations bill for the Department of Health and Human Services (Pub. Law 103-112). The bill allocates: \$750,000 for multidisciplinary research studies at chiropractic colleges and \$1 million to increase chiropractic's ability to assist in medically underserved rural areas.

Demonstration Projects. In October 1992, the first federal program dedicated solely to chiropractic research demonstration projects was authorized. This ACA-drafted initiative established the chiropractic research program that would provide funding to chiropractic colleges for "demonstration projects in which chiropractors and physicians collaborate to identify and provide effective treatment for spinal and lower back conditions."

Training Projects. In September of this year, the Senate authorized \$1 million to be used for interdisciplinary training projects...of how the delivery of chiropractic health care can be improved in rural areas, and how the retention and recruitment of chiropractic health care practitioners can be increased in rural areas.

Senators Kennedy (D-Mass) and Harkin (D-Iowa) played key roles in the authorization of the chiropractic research and training funding. Other legislators who played an integral part in the bill's passage were Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), ranking Republican member of the Senate Labor Committee; and Congressmen Neal Smith (D-Iowa) and Jim Lightfoot (R-Iowa), senior members of the House Appropriation's Committee.

"This landmark victory has come at a critically urgent time for the profession," stated ACA Board Chairman Kerwin Winkler, DC. "The passage of this bill will go a long way toward producing the evidence we already know to be true; that chiropractic is a legitimate and effective form of health care that could save this country million upon million of dollars."

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MAY 2008