



NEWS / PROFESSION

Palmer DCs Are Detained in Brazil

PHYSIOTHERAPY LEADERS FORCE POLICE ACTION IN CONTINUING FIGHT TO HAVE CHIROPRACTIC DECLARED A SPECIALTY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY.

Kathryn Feather

A team of chiropractors from Palmer Chiropractic College's Clinics Abroad program was in Florianopolis, Santa Catarina in southern Brazil on Thursday evening, June 26, offering humanitarian chiropractic services to patients in a poor local community when the federal police arrived. Acting on a complaint from Brazilian physiotherapy leaders, the chiropractors were taken to police headquarters and detained before finally being released after an explanation and visa check showed everything was in order.

"The police say they acted because of persistent calls that day from the president and lawyer for the local branch of the Council of Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists (COFFITO)," said Brazilian Chiropractors' Association (ABQ) President Dr. Juliana Piva of Rio de Janeiro. "The police arrived with media reporters organized by the COFFITO, and that evening there were print and Internet stories about the raid."

According to Palmer program leader Lori Curry, "We have had many Clinic Abroad trips in recent years as part of Palmer's partnership with both the ABQ and the School of Chiropractic at Feevale University, but never a problem until now."

This incident is the latest in what can only be described as an increasingly aggressive campaign by the Brazilian PT profession to have the federal government declare chiropractic a specialty of physiotherapy. "It is a response to recent litigation against PT leaders promoted by us to protect the independent status of chiropractic," said Dr. Ricardo Fujikawa, ABQ past president and Palmer graduate. "The real battle has now begun."

Currently, chiropractors in Brazil have no legal protection. COFFITO has ruled chiropractic is a specialty of physiotherapy and has started several part-time courses providing a certificate in chiropractic to physical therapists after as few as 100 to 300 hours over a series of weekends. Graduates of these courses have formed the Brazilian Physical Therapists Chiropractic Association, hoping to legalize chiropractic as a specialty of physiotherapy.

The World Federation of Chiropractic has spent the past year coordinating a fundraising campaign to support the ABQ's 200 members against the 95,000 physiotherapists represented by COFFITO. National associations, colleges and individuals worldwide have donated more than \$120,000 to the Brazilian chiropractic cause. The WFC believes if PTs are successful in having chiropractic acknowledged as part of physiotherapy, this will not only cause problems in Brazil, but also will encourage other countries to do the same.

"Funds raised have been a huge help to us," said former ABQ president and legislative campaign leader Dr. Sira Borge, "but, sadly, they are now all but exhausted."

"What the WFC now asks," said new WFC President Dr. Stathis Papadopoulos of Cyprus, "is that chiropractic associations, colleges, other organizations and individuals dig deep to assist the ABQ and chiropractic in Brazil once more. We must stop the PTs in Brazil from succeeding in their brazen attempt to hijack our profession."

For more background information, a list of acknowledging donors and a donation form, go to the newsroom section of the WFC Web site at www.wfc.org.

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