

## Virginia Associations Join the Unity Ranks

MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS ANNOUNCE MERGER INTENTIONS.

Editorial Staff

Following several years of talks, shared events and progressive improved communications, the [Virginia Chiropractic Association](#) (VCA) and the [Virginia Society of Chiropractic](#) (VSC) have announced their intent to unify. In a joint press release issued May 1, the membership organizations announced that a unification committee has been formed and "charged with fleshing out the myriad of organizational, operational, and legal details and considerations involved in bringing the two groups together."

"We're not talking about homogenizing chiropractic," said VCA President Dr. Bill Ward. "As Dr. Joseph Janse said, there is no need to do so. All we need to do is balance what Dr. Janse called the 'Chiropractic Triangle' of art, science and philosophy. If our [new] association balances these three aspects, we can serve all our doctors well and provide a cohesive, more effective face to the public, legislators, other healthcare organizations, and beyond."

Added VSC President Brad Robinson, DC: "We are committed to maintaining our joint agreement to take a deep breath, leave our egos at home and our past baggage in the trash, resist the [notion] that our personal idea is the only and best, and focus on what is best for the entire profession at large."

Full-fledged unification efforts in Virginia may date back as far as fall 2005, when then-VSC President Sandra Elbaum, DC, and then-VCA President Scott Cypher, DC, began an e-mail dialogue, with both suggesting the two organizations work more closely. Thereafter, each association began sending representatives to the other's conventions and board meetings.

In April 2006, the VCA and VSC conducted a joint survey of Virginia chiropractors (members and nonmembers) to assess interest in being represented by a single membership organization. Results suggested unity was a top priority, and the organizations proceeded accordingly. [As reported in DC](#), members of both boards met in Williamsburg, Va., a few months later at a meeting coordinated by Gene Veno, executive director of the Pennsylvania Chiropractic Association. As readers will recall, Veno spearheaded unification in his home state and has been involved in successful unity efforts in several other states, including [New Jersey](#) and [Colorado](#).

Months after a second meeting in Richmond, Va., which featured the first joint VCA/VSC educational program (a Medicare seminar conducted by Susan McClelland), the organizations created a joint task force to explore merger options and make recommendations to the respective boards. The task force was also charged with circumventing some of the barriers to unification that had been identified at the two previous meetings.

Also as reported in *DC*, the VCA and VSC held [a historic joint convention](#) in Richmond in September 2008, highlighted by a "unity discussion" moderated by Dr. Gerard Clum, president of [Life West](#) and past president of the [World Federation of Chiropractic](#). A short time thereafter, the organizations agreed to create a document to define what they stood for and how a single association would best represent the state's chiropractors - members and nonmembers alike; and

established a committee featuring representatives from both organizations. That document, described in the 2009 merger announcement as a modified version of the Foundational Tenets of Chiropractic (itself a modified version of the Palmer Tenets, developed recently in Georgia to help revise the state's antiquated scope-of-practice law), was approved by both boards as an official Statement of Chiropractic Identity in Virginia. That document states, in part:

The Virginia Society of Chiropractic (VSC) and The Virginia Chiropractic Association (VCA) each work for the protection and advancement of the profession that binds us and makes us a community. Recent accomplishments signal a new day for chiropractic care in our state with the likelihood of expansive accomplishments to shape our future.

The prior interaction between the VSC and the VCA has been instructive and now leads us to the conclusion that unity of purpose is too important to wait for unity of opinion on all issues.

The VCA's and VSC's collaboration found minimal variances between the two organizations with none insurmountable. In the final analysis, all chiropractors are dedicated to (1) bringing clinical skills to bear in the alleviation of human suffering and encouraging a lifetime of wellness to our patients and community, (2) preserving the essence of chiropractic care as a distinct and unique healing art, philosophy, and science and, (3) protecting the practice of chiropractic so that it remains available to the patients we serve.

On April 25, 2009, during the spring VCA/VSC convention in Wintergreen, Va., Dr. Terry Yochum ([instrumental in unity efforts in Colorado](#)) spoke about the need for professional unity; at the end of Dr. Yochum's presentation, Drs. Robinson and Ward announced that the organizations' respective boards had voted unanimously a day earlier to form the unification committee and begin the process of merging into a single membership organization.

In the joint release issued six days later, the two associations emphasized that unification "will create a single, more influential association in the Commonwealth of Virginia that will better serve chiropractic doctors, patients, and the profession as a whole. The goal is to reduce duplication, allowing the profession to devote more resources and expertise to public policy, education, legal and legislative initiatives."

The newly formed unification committee, co-chaired by Drs. Ward and Robinson, will consist of four representatives from each organization. In the coming months, the committee will be working on, among other things, articles of incorporation, bylaws and staffing. For more information on committee activities and additional background regarding merger efforts, contact Dr. Ward ([vcacentral@hughes.net](mailto:vcacentral@hughes.net)) or Dr. Robinson ([chirodocbrad@cox.net](mailto:chirodocbrad@cox.net)).

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