

Chiropractic Summit Issues Call for Action During Congressional Recess

As you may know, Congress recently adjourned for its traditional August recess period without completing work on a finalized national health reform bill. However, immediately after Labor Day, Congress is expected to accelerate the reform process - and most observers continue to predict the enactment of a completed comprehensive bill in the fall of this year.

Unless you take effective action *now*, the final bill to be enacted into law will likely fail to include the full range of safeguards and protections needed in order to ensure full and expanded access to chiropractic services the fair treatment of DCs and their patients by private insurance companies and government run insurance plans.

Regarding a finalized, national reform bill, the following remain high priorities of the entire chiropractic profession:

1. Ensuring the inclusion of provider "non-discrimination" provisions that will effectively address ongoing concerns regarding parity reimbursement and fair inclusion.
2. Ensuring that the criteria utilized in determining specific services to be included in any package of "minimum benefits" is favorable to chiropractic.
3. To the maximum extent possible, achieving the preservation of state-enacted consumer and provider protections favorable to chiropractic.
4. To ensure success with respect to the above, we must *greatly intensify* the profession's grassroots lobbying efforts and sustain them over the crucial congressional recess period that will continue through Labor Day.

Accordingly, it is imperative that you take the following action steps now:

1. Immediately go online to [ACA's ChiroVoice Legislative Action Center](#) or [ICA's Adjust the Vote](#) and send an e-mail message to your members of Congress in both the House and Senate. This process is simple, largely automated, and easy to do.
2. You are also encouraged to call your elected representatives and express your concerns. Using your own words can be highly effective; ACA Talking Points you can use to help frame an appropriate message are available [here](#). ICA Talking Points are available [here](#). You may reach the offices of your elected representatives by calling the Capitol Hill Operator at (202) 224-3121.

These additional steps can also be helpful:

- During the recess period, which runs through August, attempt to visit the nearest local office of your [U.S. House Member](#) and two [U.S. Senators](#). You may also find the location of these offices by consulting your local phone book or directory assistance. A personal visit to a local congressional office (regardless of whether you meet with the member or their staff) can be a highly effective way to lobby.
- Many members of Congress will be holding "town hall" meetings open to the public. Again, go to [House.gov](#) and [Senate.gov](#) and consult the individual member's office site. Most offices will post the dates, times and locations of these meetings. Show up and speak up are what you need to do at these important events. Be polite; do not berate, but be firm and clear in

your support for chiropractic and let them know of your concerns. Again, use the talking points available ([ACA](#), [ICA](#)) to help frame your remarks.

And *do not forget* to involve your patients:

- Patients are the "secret weapon" of the chiropractic profession. Make a determined effort to speak with each of your patients and help enlist them into joining your efforts to promote fair access to chiropractic care. An effective way you can get them to participate is to enlist them in the ACA ChiroVoice or ICA Adjust the Vote campaign, which seeks to build and activate a national database of chiropractic patients. All the information needed to do this may be obtained at www.chirovoice.org and www.adjustthevote.org.
- Go a step further and leverage your influence dramatically by recruiting a cadre of loyal patients to go with you to visit your local member of Congress or to participate with local town hall meetings that will be held in your area. This kind of "patient centered" grassroots activity can't be beat when it comes to effective, locally-based grassroots action, and it can be highly persuasive in building the congressional support we need to achieve victory.
- Also read and be familiar with documents produced through the Chiropractic Summit to help educate and inform your federal lawmakers about chiropractic's concerns and aspirations in health care reform. Print these publications and hand-deliver them to your representatives or their staff members. Here are the relevant links:

[The Path to Change in the US Health Care System: The Chiropractic Perspective](#)

[The Path to Change in the US Health Care System: Cost-Effectiveness Supplement](#)

An important final tip to remember:

When communicating with your elected federal representative, whether by e-mail, surface mail, personal visits to offices or in town hall meetings, *remember to stay on message*. Your purpose is to promote chiropractic, not to talk about the local school system, the status of the local dam project, or other assorted concerns you may have. Stay focused on the specific chiropractic-related issues that we have identified that need support and amplification.

Source: The Chiropractic Summit; submitted by Dr. Jerry DeGrado of the [Congress of Chiropractic State Associations](#), one of the primary participating organizations.