

Big Victory for DCs in Israel

ISRAELI LEGISLATURE PASSES HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LAW.

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After a long struggle, the Israeli Chiropractic Society (ICS) with its 61 members, is proud to announce that a new health care professions law was approved in March on a second and third vote in the Knesset (the Israeli parliament). Many times before, we were close to a law, but didn't get the full support of the Ministry of Health. This time, we decided to push forward with a common health care professions law for professionals with an academic degree recognized by the government (chiropractors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, clinical dietitians, etc.). These professions were neglected for so many years and were not legalized. The plan now is to place them all under the oversight of the government.

The ICS fought for more than 20 years for a common law that would protect all 90 practicing DCs in a country of nearly 7 million people. In spite of the lack of a protective law, Israeli chiropractors made progress in their field with no help from the government. More than 10 DCs are practicing today in hospitals around the country, some work as chiropractors in the air force avionic clinic, some in public and private clinics, and others teach anatomy in medical schools.

Unfortunately, in Israel there are many imposters and charlatans, part of a disturbing and growing phenomenon of "do what you want; no one can stop you." Many alternative practitioners, lacking even the basic knowledge or even the anatomy, perform spinal manipulative therapy or "gentle chiropractic" as part of their practice. In many cases, the patient is in shock for a few days or is actually injured.

This unbearable and absurd situation took shape in the early 1990s, when alternative medicine flooded Israel as a popular, but uncontrollable practice and many colleges were opened. Now we have a sincere chance to stop them. Unfortunately the damage to the profession's image in the eyes of the public, caused by the increasing numbers of charlatans during the past 20 years, has been done. For example the HMOs use chiropractic as one of many forms of alternative medicine therapy. Some insurance companies used imposters for chiropractic services, although they know about it and the ICS has even urged them to stop.

The ICS tried to fix our public image with patient education, media and newspapers, telling the true story of chiropractic. Today, most new patients won't know the differences between an MD and a DC. Since we are small in numbers, most people think that a chiropractor is some kind of an MD who specializes in the spine or had some extracurricular learning, a course maybe in an alternative or Chinese medicine. Even the MDs from the Ministry of Health who worked with us to form the chiropractic law were amazed at the amount of education and training a chiropractor should have before licensure.

All of our DCs graduated from an accredited chiropractic institute recognized by the Council of Chiropractic Education International (CCEI). This contributed to the fact that we could present to the legislature a united front regarding the high level of control and professional regulation of chiropractic around the world. More than that, we also used the World Health Organization's definition of chiropractic, which is accepted worldwide. So far we are pleased with the progress,

particularly in terms of this new health professions law. We now hope that with the passage of this important legislation, our public image will become even stronger and many of the imposters will disappear from the landscape.

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