

## Legislation to Expand Patient Access to Chiropractic Care Introduced

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) and the Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) have announced that their work with key congressional supporters has resulted in two important pieces of pro-chiropractic legislation being introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. These bills, if enacted into law, would increase patient access to vital health care - including chiropractic care - and benefit chiropractic physicians and students.

One of the legislative initiatives, the Access to Frontline Health Care Act ([H.R. 531](#)), would establish a new program that would help chiropractic physicians and other select health care providers repay their student loans if, in exchange, the providers establish and maintain practices in medically underserved areas. The legislation, introduced by Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) would designate certain types of health care providers as "frontline" providers. ACA and ACC worked closely with the sponsor of the bill to ensure that chiropractic physicians are specified in the bill as qualifying for this status.

"Many regions of our nation, particularly the rural parts of America, simply do not have sufficient numbers of qualified health care professionals to meet the needs of the local population," said ACA President Rick McMichael, DC. "This legislation would provide vital health care to underserved patients across the country, and it would also help newly graduated chiropractic physicians establish practices and repay their student loans."

The second piece of legislation, the Chiropractic Membership in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Act of 2011 ([H.R. 664](#)), introduced by Rep. Gene Green (D-Texas), would also benefit the public and the profession by requiring the inclusion of chiropractic physicians in the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps.

The Commissioned Corps is an elite team of more than 6,000 well-trained, highly qualified public health professionals dedicated to delivering the nation's public health promotion and disease prevention programs and advancing public health science. Officers in the corps provide health care services in a variety of locations and venues, including care to members of the U.S. Coast Guard and at community health centers.

"Both of these pieces of legislation are critical to the integration of chiropractic care in every federal health care program," said Frank J. Nicchi, DC, president of the Association of Chiropractic Colleges. "Chiropractic students and alumni will benefit immensely from the opportunity to provide care to citizens in medically underserved areas and to participate in the Commissioned Corps. We applaud Reps. Braley and Green for their leadership and support for the inclusion of chiropractic care in these important national health care initiatives."

The introduction of both pieces of legislation fairly early in the First Session of the current 112th Congress was intentional by ACA, ACC and the bill's supporters. "Early introduction allows for the time necessary to build critical momentum for these pro-chiropractic initiatives," said John Falardeau, ACA's vice president of government relations. "Having that momentum increases the likelihood of these bills successfully advancing through the legislative process."

To view the full text of HR 531, [click here](#). To see the full text of HR 664, [click here](#).

ACA and ACC request that chiropractic physicians contact their congressional representatives and urge them to cosponsor both of these bills.

*Source:* American Chiropractic Association