

We Get Letters & E-Mail

Chiropractic Pharmacotherapy Is Here and It's Not Going Away

Dear Editor:

I recently read [Dr. Guy Riekeman's article in DC](#) [Dec. 16, 2010] in which he lamented the paucity of chiropractic students to fill our chiropractic colleges. That prompted me to write him a letter telling him why I have never referred a single student in my 21 years as a chiropractor. My argument was that our lack of cultural authority, lack of scope, lack of access, and lack of opportunity for new chiropractic graduates shame me into not referring anyone into the profession.

I believe my sentiment is widespread among our doctors and is the primary reason for a lack of new chiropractic matriculations. The announced closing of Cleveland Los Angeles [[April 9 DC](#)] pretty much confirms that the profession is shrinking. I also sent a similar letter to the president of Parker College of Chiropractic. Neither man responded to me.

Dr. Riekeman showed up at the [New Mexico legislature](#) in March to testify against forward-thinking advanced-practice chiropractic physicians. These New Mexico doctors are trying to expand the profession to better serve their patients, improve access, establish better cultural authority, and bring prosperity to the profession. He came to protect chiropractic, I suppose. He wants us to keep doing the same thing that we have been doing for a hundred years.

I want the world to know that what he has been teaching and preaching does not work in today's health care model or in any way help our sagging cultural authority. What is being taught in most chiropractic colleges does not assure chiropractic graduates a good chance of making a decent living after graduation. Over 22 years ago, I remember Dr. James Parker speaking to us at one of his Tuesday afternoon assemblies. He made the statement: "Why, in five years from now, half of you won't be practicing." I was shocked to hear that. I did not immediately know if he was serious or joking.

I know now that he was being honest. One of the biggest mistakes in my life was not standing up immediately and demanding a refund for my time and tuition. I don't know how the man could sleep at night with that on his conscience.

Times are tough for chiropractors. In the last couple of years I have had three personal chiropractic friends close their practices due to a lack of business. They were pretty much "straight" chiropractors, so there was not a lack of philosophy that kept them from prospering. Another practicing chiropractor (a pretty "straight" guy other than a Juice Plus display and a pillow rack) just last week told me that he has not been able to pay his income taxes for the last three years, and that he was looking for something else to do to earn a living. I asked him if any of his five children were going to follow him into the profession. He looked at me sadly, smiled, and said no.

Now, it could happen; some idealistic young person might pester me into talking about chiropractic as a career. What would I tell them to do? If I could not talk them into going to any medical school, then I would tell them to go to [National University of Health Sciences](#) and go through the Doctor of

Chiropractic Medicine program after completing their requirements for their doctor of chiropractic degree. And by the way, pick you up a naturopathic degree while you're there, because in states where they are licensed, they have great cultural authority, wide scope of practice, and can do any manipulation that a chiropractor is licensed to do.

We may have lost a battle [with the defeat of H.B. 127 in New Mexico], but make no mistake, drugs have been a part of advanced-practice chiropractic in New Mexico for some time now and they are not going away. I think the straights think they won the war and protected chiropractic. I am quite sure the AMA loves them for it. Chiropractic pharmacotherapy is gaining a record for safety and efficacy; that will tell the eventual tale of who really won.

There are many doctors of chiropractic who came to New Mexico to gain new knowledge and techniques to upgrade themselves and their profession. Being one of them myself, I believe most of them have taken their new knowledge home to accomplish what has been accomplished in New Mexico.

Robert Walls, DC
Aledo, Texas

Be Careful What You Ask For

Dear Editor:

The issue with the [advanced-practice chiropractor law in New Mexico](#) brings up a couple of issues: 1) What will the malpractice insurance be? The medical doctors I know with a clean record pay a minimum of \$20,000.00 per year for prescriptive malpractice coverage. 2) In malpractice court cases, these DCs will get crucified. A minimal-level medical practitioner such as an advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP) has a year of clinicals in their graduate level education involving prescriptive practice on a daily basis. In most states they are under the supervision of an MD or DO. A 90-hour class will not be defensible in court.

Be careful of what you ask for.

Ben Walker, DC
Tampa, Fla.

Dynamic Chiropractic encourages letters to the editor to discuss any issue relevant to the profession, including response to articles that appeared in a previous issue of the publication. All letters should be e-mailed to editorial@mpamedia.com with "Letter to the Editor" in the subject field. Please include your full name, degree(s), and the city and state in which you practice. Submission represents acknowledgement that your letter may appear in a future issue of *DC*, but does not guarantee publication. We receive considerable correspondence and endeavor to publish as many perspectives as possible.

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