

## Eyeing a Seat on Capitol Hill

Q&A WITH U.S. SENATE HOPEFUL JIM ABELER, DC.

On June 18, longtime Minnesota State Representative [Jim Abeler, DC](#) (R-Anoka) announced his intention to run for the 2014 U.S. Senate seat against incumbent Sen. Al Franken. A 34-year, second-generation chiropractor and father of six sons, Dr. Abeler has worked tirelessly at the state level for the past 15 years, eliminating advertising barriers for chiropractors, fighting for insurance equality and fair inclusion in state programs, and providing freedom for health care providers to give discounts to their patients. Now, he hopes to do the same - and more - on the national political stage. Learn more about Dr. Abeler and his campaign platform, particularly as it relates to the chiropractic profession and health care, in this exclusive interview.

*Why did you decide to become a chiropractor, and how did your chiropractic background influence/shape your interest in public service on a political level?* My father was a chiropractor, Logan '49, so I grew up appreciating the profession. I admired his work and the way he was able to help so many people without drugs. Some of the results he had were amazing. Chiropractic fit in with my desire to help people and restore their health.

*What are the main points of your platform, particularly as they relate to health care and health care reform moving forward?* It is essential that all Americans get the choice of treatment and provider they desire. Chiropractic holds many of the answers to health cost and quality when it can be accessed by those who can benefit from it. The Accountable Care Act / Obamacare has good points, but needs to be improved to address the gaps that are now being observed. With respect to chiropractic, it needs to assure that care is not only an option, but [also is] available on a broad scale.

*From a chiropractic perspective, what is your opinion of the PPACA, particularly as it impacts the profession, patients and access to non-allopathic services?* As the policy designs are rolled out, it will be seen how inclusive the benefit sets are. With the cost pressures, I am concerned that some plans will attempt to exclude chiropractic and other non-allopathic services. This is false economy, and will cause harm to patients by denying necessary care. Even though there is the promise of "[actuarial equivalency](#)," how this is implemented is going to determine the impact on chiropractors, other non-allopaths and their patients.

*What, if anything, can truly be done about the pharmaceutical crisis in America and Big Pharma's grip on the public's health care decisions?* The public needs to be understand the difference between symptomatic care and true health. Health doesn't come in a pill. The wellness movement is expanding and with it greater understanding by Americans that they have responsibility for their own health. Chiropractic is well-positioned to be a key player in this arena.

*How can the chiropractic profession best position itself to influence and participate in health-care policy decisions on a state and national level?* Chiropractors themselves have to decide that they are going to invest time, energy and money in the influencing process. The decisions break in favor of those who show up. Too many chiropractors leave it to "someone else" to carry the message and do the work. This does not work at the state level, where I have served 15 years as a state representative, and it doesn't work at the national level. We need to remember the sacrifices of our

pioneer chiropractors, who paved the way and provided the freedoms we have to practice.

*In your opinion, what are the main factors (internal and external) keeping the chiropractic profession from advancing in mainstream health care, and what can it do to better its position?* We need to be united and stop judging each other. As chiropractic is a diverse profession, there are many differences between the various techniques and philosophies. However, we are all chiropractors and need to remain focused on our mission to assure the future of our great profession and its necessary role in the continuum of American health care.

*Anything else you'd like to add?* The prospect of having a "DC in DC" is an exciting one - not just for chiropractors, but also for those who seek an improved health care system. The best value in treatment is when prevention and conservative measures are included in a meaningful way. Including chiropractic and other non-allopathic treatment in America's system will result in both lower costs and improved health outcomes.

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To contact Dr. Abeler and for additional information regarding his Senate campaign, visit [www.jimabeler.com](http://www.jimabeler.com).

SEPTEMBER 2013