

Even We Fell Short!

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When *Dynamic Chiropractic* (DC) was first published in 1983, some believed there were only 25,000 licensed doctors of chiropractic in the United States. It became clear that his notion was incorrect when our first issue was mailed to over 34,000 licensed doctors.

Our mailing list was created then the same way it is maintained today. We contacted all of the chiropractic state licensing boards for their lists of licensed doctors. Once entered into our main computer, all names are subject to a "de-duping" process that removes all duplicate records using a computer program and manual verification. We knew how many licensed DCs there were, because we went to the sources.

The 1980s were exceptionally good years for chiropractic. Between 2,000 and 3,000 new doctors graduated every year, and only a small percentage of existing DCs retired or passed away. By the end of the 80s, our numbers had shot past 45,000 and were still growing.

Around that time, many of the other chiropractic publications began to set arbitrary limits on the number of DCs to whom they would send their magazines. The highest of these circulation counts included approximately 40,000 doctors, while the lowest (the national association publications) had circulations below 20,000.

Since all chiropractic publications are free to the vast majority of their subscribers, mailing more free issues just means less profit for these other publications. It also means that new DCs are less likely to read the other magazines, whose mailing lists aren't regularly cleansed and updated by the state board lists.

But *Dynamic Chiropractic's* mission statement has always been the same: to unify the profession by sending our publication to every DC "known to exist on planet Earth." It is for this reason that we keep increasing our circulation as more doctors enter our profession.

By the end of 1992, DC's circulation topped 48,000; by 1996, we broke 52,000. By the end of the 20th century, chiropractic was more than 60,000 strong. At that point in our history, the number of retired chiropractors increased somewhat, as the profession aged.

It was also during the 90s that new notions were propagated. Some continued to claim that there were only 40,000 or, at most, 50,000 licensed chiropractors in the U.S. Part of the misinformation appeared to come from other chiropractic publications, in an effort to justify circulations that continued to sit at or just above 40,000. The suggestion was that we were sending some DCs multiple copies, just to increase circulation.

Dynamic Chiropractic has always been the only publication to show each issue's circulation by state. We have done this since our very first issue. We have also continued to request licensing board lists to keep our list as up-to-date as possible. This is the only way to have an accurate database of every doctor of chiropractic.

Finally, a federally funded study put to rest the question of numbers once and for all. Through a time-consuming, exacting process, Dr. Monica Smith and her team have verified that there were 66,790 licensed doctors of chiropractic in the United States as of 2001. (Please see "New Study Finds 66,790 Licensed DCs in the U.S." on the front page of this issue.)

The good news is that our profession is much more vibrant than some may have thought. We are still growing, despite this being a difficult time for health care.

The bad news is that *Dynamic Chiropractic's* circulation is approximately 1,500 names short.

While some of these may be chiropractic college faculty members (an estimated 1,300 DCs), we are still short several hundred doctors. We are in the process of requesting new lists from the licensing boards, to identify those doctors not currently enjoying the publication.

Chiropractic in the U.S. (and the rest of the world) is growing at a steady rate. By all accounts, we are more than 67,000 strong now, and will likely break 70,000 by 2005 (our 110th year as a profession). These are the numbers we want to represent to legislators, the media and the public. These numbers are the benchmarks for measuring representation, impact and potential.

Dynamic Chiropractic will continue to mail to every known DC in the world. This is important to a growing profession in which so few belong to a national association. Doing so will help the profession stay connected and informed about the important issues facing us in the future.

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