

Staying Steady in Uncertain Times

Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

It seems there is no shortage of turmoil both inside and outside the chiropractic profession. Depending on the country you live in, "wars or rumors of wars" are affecting you directly or indirectly.

Having served my time in the U.S. Navy at the end of the Vietnam War (or was it a "conflict"), I can't help but get that *déjà vu* feeling over some of what is happening with the current Iraqi conflict. While technology and strategy have improved our methods and outcomes, it appears conflict and turmoil are a part of life, no matter how much we wish it otherwise.

The same holds true for much of what the chiropractic profession is experiencing worldwide.

We see DCs in some countries still struggling for official recognition, while those in other countries are fighting to retain practice rights won many years before.

Quebec is a classic example of how we must always be ready for a battle. The doctors of chiropractic there have been able to diagnose and order tests for many years; now, they must file an appeal lawsuit in order to win those rights back. (See "*Sacre Bleu!* Judge Rules Against Chiropractic: Quebec DCs Lose Right to Diagnose, Order Lab Tests" on the front page of this issue.)

The enemies of bias and ignorance are constantly trying to erode the chiropractic benefits the public continues to seek. Propelled by budget cuts and fierce lobbying by other professions, chiropractic must always be watchful for situations that will further limit access by the public, and ultimately restrain our ability to practice chiropractic the way it was meant to be practiced.

We have to commit ourselves to fighting for our rights as a profession, or we must be willing to accept the consequences apathy and noninvolvement bring.

Many of the challenges we face follow an all-too-familiar pattern:

- ignore the challenge, because it doesn't affect us directly;
- rationalize the impact of the growing problem as "not very significant";
- demonstrate a certain level of concern as the situation becomes damaging, but always in the context of expecting someone else will do something about it;
- become furious over the fact that no one did anything to stop the disastrous event we are now facing;
- complain about how the profession is "not what it used to be," as we learn to accept the situation we could have stopped at the very beginning; or
- ignore the next challenge facing us, because it doesn't affect us directly.

This is the pattern for most of the chiropractic profession in the United States, and probably for the chiropractic professions in a few other countries, as well.

With fewer than 10,000 general members in our two national chiropractic associations, and small

numbers in many of our state associations, we are facing potential challenges we may not be able to meet effectively.

Like freedom, the ability to practice chiropractic is a right that must be won, guarded and defended when necessary.

DMP Jr.

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