

Questions and Answers and Questions (QAQs)

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Fellow doctors of chiropractic frequently ask me questions about why they should join the APHA. "What's in it for me? What's the value to me individually, or to the chiropractic profession as a whole?" My gut reaction is to snap back with something like this:

- "Where have you been for the past 24 years? During that time, a small, persistent, dedicated group of your DC colleagues changed history by convincing the oldest, largest and most influential public health association in the world to change its blatant 1969 official anti-chiropractic policy, superceding it in 1983 with one (#8331) that recognized chiropractic as "... safe and effective in the clinical management of certain disorders of the neuromusculoskeletal system, particularly low back pain."
- "Where have you been for the past 20 years while that same group of unpaid volunteers continued the effort to enhance chiropractic communications and credibility by participating in mainstream public-health activities, using APHA as the vehicle for that participation?"
- "Where have you been since 1995, when the Chiropractic Health Care Section (CHCS) was established within the APHA, and our profession achieved full equity and parity with the other 26 health disciplines represented by the APHA?"
- "Didn't you know that in addition to holding several other elected and appointed offices in APHA, a DC served on its executive board in 2000, and was chairman of its important intersectional council?"
- "Didn't you know that both the ACA and the ICA have endorsed APHA membership as important for every individual chiropractor, regardless of his or her philosophical orientation?"
- "Didn't you know that the ICA, ACA, CCE, ACC, and seven chiropractic colleges (Cleveland Chiropractic College, Los Angeles; Western States Chiropractic College; New York Chiropractic College; National University of Health Sciences; Palmer College of Chiropractic; Southern California University of Health Sciences; and Life University) have been agency members of APHA at some time?"
- "Don't you realize that we get more political "bang for our buck" through APHA's low annual membership dues (\$160 per year for doctors; \$50 for students) than through nearly any other means?"
- "Don't you read any chiropractic media or professional publications? How long have you been a 'chiro-ostrich'?"

... but instead, I usually bite my tongue, hold my curmudgeonly retorts, and give them a brief history of events marking chiropractic accomplishments in APHA, along with a list of the tangible

and intangible benefits of membership. I usually also exhort, "Do it (join) for yourself, do it for your profession, be a part of this!" Sometimes this works; sometimes it doesn't; sometimes the questioner uncomprehendingly replies (or whines), "But why should I join, what's in it for meeee?"

So, lately I've been thinking about trying a different approach. Sometimes, questions can be best answered with questions in return. I've compiled six brief statements and rhetorical questions to ponder, and choices to make about membership. APHA has over 55,000 individual and affiliate members. The chiropractic health-care section, which once had over 800 members, now has only about 200 remaining as of early 2003. The chiropractic profession, working within APHA since 1979, has achieved visibility and enhanced chiropractic communication and credibility, and has used APHA successfully as a vehicle for integration and participation in mainstream health activities.

1. Do you want the chiropractic profession to increase its political influence and clout within APHA by increasing its member numbers, or do you want the chiropractic profession to operate in isolation, without the additional influence of APHA's multidisciplinary organization?

APHA is rated among the 15 most effective lobby groups in the U.S.; its voice is heard and its agenda makes an impression on Capitol Hill.

1. Do you want chiropractic to be one of the 26 health disciplines represented when APHA testifies on Capitol Hill, or do you want it to be the only major health discipline not represented by APHA?

Since 1983, policy #8331 has been widely circulated to government leaders; the intellectual, educational and scientific communities; and consumer groups.

1. Do you want chiropractic to continue to participate in APHA's policy-making and position-paper process?

By virtue of its numeric strength within APHA, chiropractic holds two voting seats on the APHA's policy-making body, the governing council.

1. Do you want chiropractic to increase its numbers to the "300" level, thereby maintaining its current two seats; increase member numbers to over 400, and thus qualify for more than the current two seats; or would you rather we forfeit the two seats and be disfranchised as a discipline?

Since 1995, when the chiropractic health-care section was established within APHA, we have had full equity and parity within its structure, participating as a full-status partner in APHA activities.

1. Do you want the chiropractic health-care section to continue as a full-fledged section within APHA's regular structure, or do you want the CHCS to forfeit its section status, be downgraded to a special primary interest group, and thereby relinquish its section budget and all of its seats?

Besides those mentioned earlier, other agency members include the Centers for Disease Control (CDC); the American Optometric Association; various voluntary and government health agencies; the March of Dimes; Physicians for Social Responsibility; the Association of Schools of Public Health; numerous universities; and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

1. Do you want chiropractic's top two professional associations and the chiropractic colleges under the umbrella of the ACC to maintain their agency memberships within APHA, or do you want the ACA, ICA and ACC to drop their memberships?

After pondering these questions, answers and more questions, if you would like to join APHA (or renew your membership), contact Dr. Monica Smith, CHCS membership chairperson, at 319-884-5173 or via e-mail: smith_m@palmer.edu. You also can download a membership application at www.APHA.org.

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