

A War Against Chiropractic in Italy: A Threat to Chiropractic Worldwide

Dear Colleagues:

On May 17, 2002, the Italian Federation of Medical Doctors, Surgeons and Dentists (FNOMCeO), effectively declared war on chiropractic in Italy, with the expressed intention of absorbing the chiropractic profession by legislative action. Their aim was to convince the Italian Parliament to officially declare chiropractic as a "medical act" to be practiced exclusively by medical doctors and dentists.

Since this ignominious declaration, the powerful FNOMCeO has been waging a ferocious mass-media campaign, attempting to turn public opinion in their favor to facilitate the passage of a proposed law currently set to be forwarded to Parliament for final vote. If this proposal should pass as written, aspiring medical chiropractors will become certified to practice chiropractic through abbreviated courses, such as the 80-hour chiropractic course offered by the state-recognized university "La Sapienza" in Rome. The completion of this course will qualify participants to register with the FNOMCeO as chiropractic practitioners, while true doctors of chiropractic will be denied the possibility to practice our profession.

The Italian Chiropractic Association (Associazione Italiana Chiroprattici - AIC) has reason to be extremely concerned about this anomalous and dangerous situation, due to the fact that a large number of members of Parliament are also medical doctors, and may be influenced by this massive medical propaganda machine.

The AIC is a small association of approximately 160 members, and we find ourselves overwhelmed by the enormous resources the medical profession is investing in its mass-media and lobbying campaigns. Therefore, we are seeking assistance from concerned chiropractic colleagues worldwide in our efforts to stop organized medicine from eliminating chiropractic in Italy and establishing a dangerous precedent against the chiropractic profession worldwide.

To illustrate the seriousness of our situation and the arrogance of the Italian medical profession, we have included the complete text of the position paper produced in Terni by the FNOMCeO, in an English translation [see below].

The AIC has established a legal fund to help cover expenses in our fight against the medical establishment. Please help in whatever manner and measure you can to preserve chiropractic in Italy. All financial donations should be sent to the AIC at the following address:

Associazione Italiana Chiroprattici
Via Brigata Liguria, 1/20
16121 - Genova
Italy
Phone: +39 - 010-5533036

Author's note: The following information is a literal translation of the Italian Medical Association document regarding unconventional therapies.

FNOMCeO (National Federation of Medical and Dentists' Associations)
NON-CONVENTIONAL MEDICINE
THE POSITION OF FNOMCeO

In Terni on the 17th of May 2002, the FNOMCeO held a national convention on the theme, "The Medical Profession and Non-Conventional Medicines: Risks and Opportunities." The event, which was widely covered by the media, saw the participation of the 103 provincial chairpersons of the medical association, political exponents and other interested parties who, with their contribution, enabled the convention to draw up a document that went on to be approved by the FNOMCeO National Council at their May 18th meeting, which stands as a reference point for the medical profession regarding the practice of non-conventional medicines and treatments.

Below we reproduce the entire text of the document.

FNOMCeO GUIDELINES ON NON-CONVENTIONAL MEDICINES AND PRACTICES The "non-conventional medicines and practices" considered to be relevant in Italy from a social point of view, both on the basis of the indications given in Resolution No. 75 of the European Parliament, May 29th, 1997, and in Resolution No. 1206 of the European Council, November 4th, 1999, and on the basis of the growing use of some of them by the public, as well as forms of non-conventional therapy that have taken a foothold in Europe in recent decades, are:

1. *Acupuncture*

2. *Herbal Medicine*

3. *Ayurvedic Medicine*

4. *Anthrosophic Medicine*

5. *Homeopathic Medicine*

6. *Traditional Chinese Medicine*

7. *Homotoxicology*

8. *Osteopathy*

9. *Chiropractic*

The practice of the above non-conventional medicines and treatments should be considered medical practice to all effects, and thus we believe that:

- *These medicines and treatments - as medical practice - should be practiced and managed exclusively by medical doctors and dentists for those patients who are likely to gain benefit, having provided adequate information and obtained explicit conscious consent;*
- *Medical doctors and dentists are the only health professionals able to establish which patients are likely to benefit from the use of these medicines and practices, since only medical doctors and dentists are qualified to make this diagnosis, thus permitting the correct discernment of their usefulness and benefit from the use of non-conventional treatments;*
- *In this framework, medical doctors and dentists are the only professionals in a position to control the diffusion of non-conventional medicines and practices from being suggested or prescribed to patients who can or cannot benefit from the previously mentioned medicines and practices, keeping these patients from the scientifically accredited therapies available, about which medical doctors and dentists should keep constantly up-to-date through the ECM (Educazione Continua in Medicina) Continuing Education in Medicine;*
- *Medical doctors and dentists are the only professionals who can legitimately carry out diagnosis, prepare the relative treatment plan and verify that it is carried out on the patient;*
- *The FNOMCeO and all provincial medical associations must report and follow up, correctly and in good time, any non-medical professionals practicing the abovementioned non-conventional medicines and treatments, reporting them to the relevant authorities;*
- *The FNOMCeO and all provincial medical associations must take disciplinary measures against those medical doctors and dentists who do not respect the rules mentioned above, in conformity with the current Code of Ethics, or who lend their name to cover the practices of non-medical professionals regarding the abovementioned non-conventional medicines and treatments;*
- *It would be appropriate to establish a national FNOMCeO database on international, national and regional legislation regarding non-conventional medicines and treatments, also based on reports from individual regional associations;*
- *In order to ensure the coherent development of systems intended to ensure effectiveness and safety, in response to the consistent demand for non-conventional medicines and treatments, we should forcefully request the establishment of a national agency, consisting of institutional bodies such as the Ministry of Health, the Regions, MURST and FNOMCeO.*

Among the main roles to be carried out by this organization, which could be structured into analogous regional bodies, we would foresee:

1. *Establishing and regulating activities regarding the individual non-conventional medicines and practices;*
2. *Promoting basic and applied research, according to the rules of good clinical practice, into exclusive and, above all, integrated areas, favoring better knowledge of the principles and appropriate use of non-conventional medicines and practices within medical culture, making use of our own funding and that of public and private entities in Italy and Europe;*
3. *Monitoring and information on the safe, effective and appropriate use of non-conventional medicines and practices, through six-monthly/yearly reports to the institutions responsible for health protection;*
4. *Regulating training syllabi by:*
 1. *establishing criteria for the adoption of teaching standards;*
 2. *defining criteria and requirements for the accreditation of public and private entities involved in teaching and training;*
5. *Urging the competent institutions to take all those prescriptive and regulative measures useful to the pursuit of their institutional purposes;*
 - *We should urge Parliament to take steps leading to an amendment to standards regarding medical publicity, as proposed by the FNOMCeO, with the insertion of specific standards for the sector;*
 - *We should urge the relevant authorities to take action toward the inclusion of entries, regarding professional services provided in exercising the abovementioned non-conventional medicines and practices, within the national minimum tariff list of fees for medical-surgical and dental services (decree DPR February 17th, 1992), which, moreover, is in need of substantial and comprehensive reviewing;*
 - *We should provide for the establishment of a register, kept by the provincial medical and dental associations, subdivided into sections for each of the abovementioned non-conventional medicines and practices. The inclusion of medical doctors and dentists in the register will depend upon criteria to be established with the orientation and coordination of the FNOMCeO, in collaboration with the school and scientific societies accredited by the FNOMCeO, and roles and functions will be distinguished.*

The National Federation of Medical and Dentists' Associations strongly requests urgent and non-deferrable legislative intervention by Parliament, in order to approve specific regulations concerning non-conventional medicines and practices, on the basis of the information contained in this document.

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