

Cuba Wants Chiropractic!

Chiropractic has once again been represented at an international conference in Cuba. The Second Natural Conference of the Cuban Society of Bioenergetic and Naturalist Medicine was held in Havana, Sept. 30 - Oct. 4. A variety of health care disciplines were represented at the event, including acupuncture, magnetic therapy, naturopathy and osteopathy.

I attended the conference along with fellow U.S. DCs Art Annis and Margie Baum (all from Wilmington, N.C.); two chiropractic physicians also attended from the United Kingdom. Dr. Annis presented a paper on the safety of chiropractic spinal manipulation, and I conducted a symposium on pain control and submitted a paper on the role of applied kinesiology in a traditional health care setting. All presentations were well-attended and well-received.

"We need this profession in Cuba," commented Dr. Juventino Acosta, a urologist who has taught all over the world, and who founded the first clinic in Cuba utilizing a multidisciplinary natural and traditional approach to health care. He extended invitations to the participants to come to his clinic and teach.

We had the privilege of visiting the International Latin American Institute of Medicine (outside Havana), where students from all over the world come to learn a variety of health care treatments. This program includes students from the U.S. who are academically qualified, but who lack the financial resources to pursue medical education in the states; the Cuban government pays for their complete education. One caveat: After their training, the new doctors must return to their home country to practice. Our visit was a rare opportunity, since the school is bombarded with requests for visits, most of which are denied, due to the disruption of the students' schedules. However, when the U.S. students learned that we represented a natural form of health care, they were insistent in their requests that we come and offer seminars or classes in our profession, and share our approach to health.

Our reception was typical of what we have received at each of the conferences we have attended in Cuba. The openness and receptivity to our profession is undeniable. Perhaps the Cuban attitude toward chiropractic is best illustrated by the comments of Dr. Bernardo Acosta Martinez, chair of the Department and Provincial Group of Natural and Traditional Medicine in the province of Holguin:

"The degree and depth of precision that chiropractic achieves in the diagnosis and changes in the neuromusculoskeletal system and the visceral changes reflected in it are not achieved by allopathic medicine. The high degree of success achieved by chiropractic in the treatment of many illnesses in less time than that required by conventional treatment reflects many advantages: It avoids the side-effects of medicines; it is more cost-effective than medicines; it re-establishes health in a shorter time; and it returns people to their social and work activities in less time [than conventional therapies]. I want to take this opportunity to express our great interest in continuing to study this excellent form of treatment and to introduce it in all its forms in our pre- and postgraduate studies."

With such praise and the tremendous reception we have received when given the opportunity to

treat the people attending these conferences, it is important that we establish formal ties to the Cuban health care community. The next conference to present this opportunity, The First Worldwide Conference on the Scientific Basis of Traditional Natural Medicine and Bioenergetics, will be held in Holguin July 5-11, 2004. What better forum for us to present research findings that support our profession? I challenge all of you and our learning institutions to represent us there. I will be glad to provide more information for anyone interested in attending, including how to arrange your travel. You can also contact Dr. Acosta (he is also the head of the conference organizing committee) at anato@crystal.hlg.sld.cu.

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