



The historic declarations included chiropractic leaders from various states.

NEWS / PROFESSION

Chiropractic Leaders Sign Declaration of United Public Relations

Kent Greenawalt

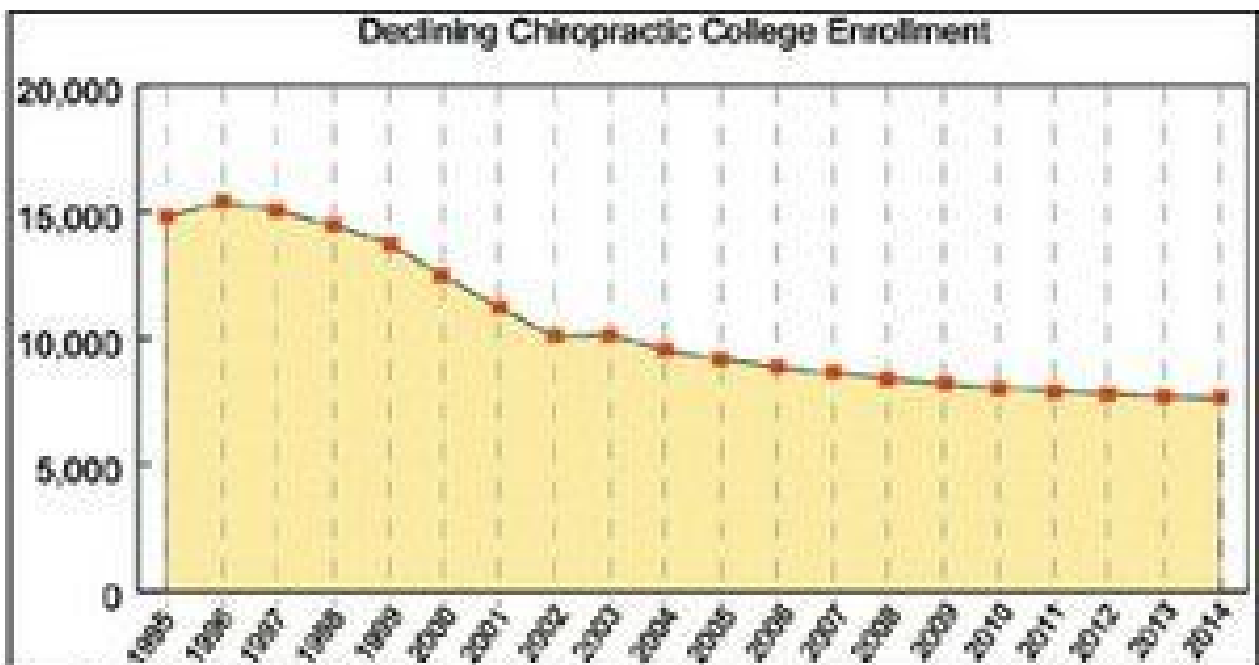
On Saturday, Nov. 8, at the annual Congress of Chiropractic State Associations (COCSA) meeting in Las Vegas, Nev. (see recap below), approximately 20 leaders from different national chiropractic associations, colleges and publications agreed to unite together in support of a nationwide public relations campaign for promoting chiropractic. The assemblage was invited to participate by Kent Greenawalt, president and CEO of Foot Levelers, Inc., because of each group's interest in running its own public relations campaigns.

"We're here today because each of you, to my knowledge, wants to start your own public relations campaign. And I do, too. However, what we're doing is not working!" Greenawalt exclaimed. He pointed out chiropractic's declining image in America - an alarming trend - by citing the following:

1. Chiropractors only see one in 10 Americans as patients. This ratio needs to be improved. One in 10 is 10% - or only 10 out of 100 Americans. Just think - if we saw two out of 10, our profession would double! Motto: A small change can make a huge difference.
2. It's not unusual for chiropractic to receive bad press coverage in the media. Our profession is constantly playing defense - defending what we do and correcting inaccurate, biased reporting.
3. In 1996, there were 15,400 new enrollments at chiropractic colleges. In 2002, there were approximately 10,058. This is a change of 5,342 students - or a decline of 34% - in just six years."



Signers of the historic declarations included chiropractic leaders from numerous organizations.



College enrollment has declined significantly, as represented by this graph, projected to 2014.

Unified Public Relations for Strength

"Part of the problem is that we're sending out scattered messages. The very first step we have to take is simply to agree not to start separate campaigns," explained Greenawalt, as he unveiled the first of two documents awaiting the signatures of those present. The first was the *Declaration of National Public Relations Unity*.

In part, it reads:

We solemnly declare and resolve that we have one unified message: to get the general public to 'go see a chiropractor,' and we agree not to start any public relations efforts on our own.

Having received consensus from the group on these two points, Greenawalt introduced the second document to be signed, the *Pledge of National Public Relations Unity*.

"Now, if we do anything, we are going to do it together. We all want a public relations campaign, but our separate investments don't even buy a cup of coffee in the public relations arena," said Greenawalt. "We need each other!"

"If you look at the pharmaceutical background," noted Frank Corbo, DC, editor of *Chiropractic Wellness and Fitness Magazine*, "the drug companies have a \$2.5 billion marketing budget, and they've spent \$6 million by the end of January. This is not only important - it's vital. We need a united message, our government is tired of hearing mixed messages, and they need a singular message."

The leaders then agreed on the following:

- We will retain a qualified national public relations firm who is trained and experienced in delivering a message to the nation as a whole. This public relations firm will do the crafting, testing, and development of the message.
- The firm will develop and manage the plan.
- The public relations firm will be in charge of the campaign.

In support of the agreements, the group pledged through their signatures, "to let the experts (the public relations firm) run the campaign and to contribute our money, but not our opinions."

"Fasten your seat belts," said Greenawalt, "because I'm asking you to pledge that you will donate money (of any amount) and not give your opinion. We need to find a firm, let it conduct focus groups, test the message, and then run with it. We need to let the pros run it."

Dr. Daryl Wills agreed, pointing out that dentists were originally against their own groundbreaking PR campaign telling the public to brush their teeth to prevent cavities. "You have to have faith in the PR firm we hire and let them do it," he said.

"I congratulate all these dynamic leaders in taking this action," summarized an enthusiastic Greenawalt. "I believe we have made history today. After 108 years of chiropractic, we have finally, formally agreed to work together. This is a proud day!"

Signatories to the two agreements included representatives of the:

American Chiropractic Association

Association of Chiropractic Colleges

Congress of Chiropractic State Associations

Foundation for Chiropractic Progress

Foundation for Chiropractic Research and Education

International Chiropractors Association

National Board of Chiropractic Examiners

World Federation of Chiropractic

Cleveland Colleges of Chiropractic

Parker College of Chiropractic

Western States Chiropractic College

Chiropractic Economics

Chiropractic Fitness and Wellness Magazine

Dynamic Chiropractic

Those interested in participating in this united effort are invited to address letters of support to:

Kent Greenawalt
Foot Levelers, Inc.
PO Box 12611
Roanoke, VA 24027-2611

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