

Report of the NCLF: Forum and Open Communication Prove Invaluable

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Leaders from national organizations met April 19-20 in Chicago for the third annual summit of the National Chiropractic Leadership Forum (NCLF), and proved once again what great strides can be made when the profession works together. The group aggressively addressed leadership needs to establish a strong foundation for continued consensus building between organizations.

A significant accomplishment of the 2002 summit was the development of definitions for chiropractic terminology, the lack of which has been a stumbling block for the profession. Consensus was reached among participants on definitions for the following terms and phrases:

- adjustment;
- chiropractic;
- chiropractic medicine;
- chiropractic physician;
- chiropractic necessity;
- clinical necessity;
- medical necessity;
- manipulation;
- manual therapy;
- mobilization;
- motion segment;
- spinal motion segment;
- subluxation;
- subluxation complex; and
- subluxation syndrome.

In addition to these definitions, participants agreed on a recommendation to encourage the use of the preferred terms: "chiropractic," "chiropractor," "doctor of chiropractic" and "chiropractic healthcare" in publications, presentations and communications. The boards of individual participating organizations will review the definitions and recommendation, with ratification expected at the next NCLF meeting in November.

The group also expressed unanimous acceptance and support of a proposed bill as a model law for all states. New Jersey Senate Bill 2693 defines the practice of chiropractic, and permits only licensed chiropractors to perform spinal adjustments to correct subluxations. The full text of the bill can be viewed on the Congress of Chiropractic State Associations (COCSA) website at www.cocsa.org.

Participants of the 2002 summit also reaffirmed the *Declaration of Chiropractic Professional Responsibilities* (DCPR) and the *St. Louis Principles*, documents created at last year's summit in Missouri. The DCPR is a code of conduct for doctors of chiropractic, and identifies the responsibilities and expectations for every DC, as follows, to:

- maintain alumni membership;
- exercise jurisprudence;
- maintain ethical practice standards;
- be an active member in a state chiropractic association;
- be an active member in a national chiropractic association;
- make regular contributions to chiropractic research;
- engage in grassroots political activity;
- support the political process financially;
- live and practice a chiropractic wellness lifestyle;
- demonstrate intra and interprofessional cooperation and respect; and
- participate in mentoring new members of the profession.

Widespread acceptance of these responsibilities will ensure the growth, development and enhancement of our chiropractic profession, and the NCLF encourages all doctors of chiropractic to embrace this document as a roadmap for their professional lives. A frameable version is available at the COCSA website.

Similarly, the *St. Louis Principles* are a code of conduct for NCLF participants, and include the following guiding principles for interaction between chiropractic leaders and organizations:

- Respect personal differences in style and substance;
- participate in meetings openly and honestly;
- remain true to our decisions and not make promises we can't keep;
- respect the professional differences that can exist within the chiropractic scope of practice, as outlined in the ACC paradigm;
- air our differences inside the leadership forum, and not in public;
- hold ourselves and each other to the highest standards of accountability and integrity, as expected by the members and constituencies we represent; and
- require mutual agreement on all public communications regarding the NCLF.

Both documents were focal points of the Chicago meeting, and assisted the group with openly discussing a recent conflict that arose surrounding the appointment of the VA advisory committee, after collaborative efforts of participating NCLF organizations had resulted in passage of the VA bill.

Despite the inability of the profession to come to an agreement on the makeup of the advisory committee, the group sustained the momentum of the leadership forum by establishing a crisis communications plan and conflict protocol, to avoid future breakdowns between the organizations.

While expressing disappointment over the inability of the group to resolve the VA advisory issue, COCSA President Dr. Tom Klapp deemed the summit an overall success, citing the numerous significant accomplishments made for a profession that has spent the past 100 years "not talking to each other." According to Klapp, "If this were easy, it would have been done a long time ago. We applaud the efforts of Dr. Spoto and those at the table to see the bigger picture, and to keep working toward a better chiropractic environment."

The NCLF is an ongoing effort of the COCSA to create an apolitical, proactive forum to open lines of communication between national chiropractic organizations and the profession. Participating in the NCLF are the:

- American Chiropractic Association;
- Association of Chiropractic Colleges;
- Council on Chiropractic Guidelines and Practice Parameters;
- Council on Chiropractic Practice;
- Congress of Chiropractic
- State Associations;
- Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards;
- Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research;
- International Chiropractors Association;
- National Board of Chiropractic Examiners;
- World Chiropractic Alliance; and
- World Federation of Chiropractic.

Companies supporting and supplementing the effort are:

- the ChiroCode Institute;
- Foot Levelers;
- Leader/Leander Health Technologies; and
- MPAMedia.

Dr. Mario Spoto (Pennsylvania), a past president of COCSA, chairs the effort, and Mary W. Rowe serves as facilitator. A special page of NCLF activities is posted at the COCSA website.

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