

National Chiropractic Leadership Conference

COCSA-SPONSORED EVENT BRINGS U.S. ORGANIZATIONS TO THE TABLE

Report by the COCSA

Representatives from chiropractic's major organizations met in St. Louis for three days in April 2000 to explore common goals and seek a shared vision of chiropractic's future. The meeting was guided by the facilitation of well-known health care futurist Clement Bezold, PhD, who facilitated open and frank discussions.

The conference was part of an effort by the Congress of Chiropractic State Associations (COCSA) called "Project Leadership." The goal of the program is to "open lines of communications and foster unity between chiropractic organizations so that the profession can develop a shared vision."

Phase I of the conference took place at the 1998 COCSA convention in Atlanta where leaders of chiropractic's national organizations met with leaders of chiropractic state associations to discuss the future of the profession. Two messages predominated: the lack of a shared vision for the profession, and that despite the differences between the various chiropractic groups, all were working toward the same goal - the advancement of the profession.

At COCSA's 1999 meeting, the national chiropractic organizations again lent support to a unified vision. Each was asked to share with state association leadership their top three priority projects and discuss how these projects speak to a shared vision.

Having had two years of warm-up, the St. Louis meeting was the place to get down to the tasks at hand. Throughout the meeting, many issues were discussed. Positions were questioned and defended with a level of professional respect that never wavered. A number of participants noted that their opinions about some of the other leaders improved during the process.

The first sign of success was the unanimous endorsement of the Position on Chiropractic developed by the Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) as the shared vision for the chiropractic profession. This established the basis of understanding and agreement on such issues as: the chiropractic paradigm, the subluxation; and chiropractic scope and chiropractic practice (please see the complete Chiropractic Paradigm and Chiropractic Scope and Practice on the ACC's website: www.chirocolleges.org).

The second hurdle would prove more challenging: to establish meaningful goals. But the leaders proved up to the task. Again, the discussion was open and direct. The opinions expressed reflected those of the entire profession and were thoroughly discussed and debated. Ultimately, three goals were developed and embraced:

- unity;
- public awareness/increased utilization;
- attaining \$10 million for research by 2005.

The goals are progressive and will require five to ten years to be accomplished.

Once the meeting ended, the representatives were given the task of taking the vision and newly developed goals back to their respective organizations. Each organization considered the vision and goals carefully. Ultimately, each organization was able to support the spirit of the goals, although some organizations had reservations regarding the specifics.

The next conference is scheduled for May 2001. This will be the meeting where the hard work begins. Together, we will:

- review the issues;
- develop strategies;
- design action steps;
- determine organizational responsibilities; and establish a timeline.

Whoever said, "The devil is in the details" knew what they were taking about. While these goals were relatively easy to embrace, their implementation is much harder. To make these goals realities, each organization will have to sacrifice some individual agendas in favor of a shared vision for chiropractic's future.

COCSA Leadership Conference Participants

American Chiropractic Association

- Dr. Jim Mertz, president
- Dr. Jim Edwards, executive committee member

International Chiropractors' Association

- Dr. Elliot Foster, board member
- Dr. Tom Klapp, board member

Association of Chiropractic Colleges

- Dr. Ken Padgett, president
- Dr. Carl Cleveland, III, board member
- David O'Bryon, executive director

Council on Chiropractic Guidelines and Practice Parameters

- Dr. Len Suiter, chairman
- Dr. Mac McClelland, council liaison

Congress of Chiropractic State Associations

- Dr. Mario Spoto, project chairman
- Dr. Dale Cohen, president
- Dr. Jerry DeGrado, director district 4,

- Janet Jordan, executive director

Foundation for the Advancement of Chiropractic Tenents and Science

- Dr. Hugo Gibson

Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards

- Dr. Larry Gerstein, past president

Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research

- DeAnna Beck, administrative director

National Association of Chiropractic Attorneys

- Paul Lambert, president

National Board of Chiropractic Examiners

- Dr. Frank Hideg, board chairman
- Dr. Paul Townsend, director of practical testing

World Federation of Chiropractic

- Dr. Paul Carey, vice president
- David Chapman-Smith, secretary-general

Also represented:

Institute for Alternative Futures

- Clement Bezold, president

Dynamic Chiropractic

- Don Petersen, Jr., publisher/editor

Leader International Corporation

- *Rick Flaherty, president, CEO*

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