

## Chiropractic Visions of the Leaders of "Our Virtual Chiropractic Association"

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*Editor's note:* In this issue, and the next four, we will present commentary from the five doctors for whom you voted to lead "Our Virtual Chiropractic Association." Each doctor will be highlighted on the front page - one per issue. Their order of appearance is based on the chronology in which we received their articles.

The ultimate goal of Our Virtual Chiropractic Association (OVCA) should be to devote most of its assets and energy to educating the public about chiropractic's therapeutic superiority; safety; cost-effectiveness; scientific/clinical credibility; and superb quality of its educational facilities. This must be done in the most practical, effective and cost efficient way possible. We may combine positive, well-documented facts with an exposé of the intellectually dishonest conduct of political medicine that has been undermining rational, safe and effective health care in America. Combining these two messages and placing patient welfare above all else will win us approval of an informed public.

When it comes to rational health care, the public may be ignorant of the truth, but it's not stupid! Our most powerful weapon is truth, and our greatest enemy is public ignorance. To overcome this, we need to candidly expose medical abuse and dishonesty, while shedding light on the safe and superior alternate choices provided by chiropractic. Both messages need to be broadcast for greater public impact. As long as we have truth on our side, and a wealth of solid documented facts from reliable sources to support it, we will prevail. The secret of success lies in having a solid source of information and promoting the message on a major scale. OVCA can be a no-nonsense "hard-line," compassionate activist organization that won't tolerate dishonest exclusion of proven superior therapeutic methods. Its position: If you don't stand for something, you'll stand for anything.

Legislators should realize that unlike typical "selfish interest" groups, OVCA is dedicated to truth and honesty in health care, and that it has the capability to contact virtually every radio, TV and newspaper in the country with hundreds of highly trained chiropractic spokespersons prepared to present their cases. In other words, don't mess with chiropractic - or face an army of well-trained media spokespersons setting the record straight.

Chiropractors want to be liked, and are reluctant to speak out against medical abuses. Many DCs have tenuous relationships with MDs, and often look the other way when they see stupid or dishonest medical conduct. The typical American DC asks, "Do they like us?" Whereas the typical British DC ponders, "Do they respect us?" Since chiropractors are still isolated from 98 percent of the hospitals in America, I wonder how sincere the medical community's love or respect is for chiropractic.

Organizations put a lot of emphasis on lobbying in Washington to advance their vested interests. Chiropractic is a special lobby group because its vested interests are consistent with the public's best interest. For example, we had to sue HCFA to prevent it from bastardizing spinal manipulation, yet the

public is the greatest benefactor of our action. The same applies to our lawsuit against Blue Cross, which is also in the public's best interest.

We need the capability to make the public fully aware of the facts, and OVCA has that ability through hundreds of spokespersons. The two things that politicians understand are money and votes, and if our organization can influence votes for or against politicians based on their voting records, and politicians realize that we have the power to rally those spokespersons, they will respect us.

Public education is everything. It makes lobbying and legislation much easier and more cost effective. It can even prevent some very costly litigation before it starts. Again, the key to success boils down to solid information, and ultimately taking our case to the media.

Our leadership has frequently expressed remorse that less than a quarter of us belong to a national organization. The most common excuse for nonmembership is a lack of money. I believe that if we had 100,000 chiropractors and all of them were members, we would still not be able to correct our problem, due to inept PR. To rationalize our dilemma by lamenting, "If we only had more members..." is an excuse to fail. It's what you do with what you have that matters, or, "It ain't what you've got, it's the way that you use it."

The approach to OVCA is to urge every state chiropractic association to start a "chiropractic media spokesperson" program, rallying an army of spokespersons by recruiting new doctors struggling to get new patients. It's a common misconception that a chiropractor has to be a chiropractic officer to be a representative. This is not true. Of course, spokespersons would have to qualify themselves and be able to prove to their peers that they are capable of accurately representing the views of their organization. And what better source is there than utilizing struggling chiropractors? They have more time on their hands, and will advance themselves individually while elevating the entire profession with them. Everybody wins.

All we need is a comprehensive training manual for the chiropractors. I believe that manual can be my book, *Medicine, Monopolies and Malice: How the Medical Establishment Tried to Destroy Chiropractic in the U.S. (MMM)*. All rights to the book from the original publisher have reverted back to me, which is a blessing and a gift. I can do whatever I wish with the book, which includes giving the benefits to chiropractic. I have completely divested myself of all profits from the book, and am giving away 80 percent of the profits to chiropractic. My motive? Through full-page advertisements in *Radio-TV Interview Report*, (circulated to 5,000 radio and TV stations in the United States and Canada, considered the "bible" of talk-show hosts), I advise the talk shows that I am on a crusade for chiropractic, and that I'm not profiting from the book. The stations and the listening audiences are far more receptive of the information in the book when they know I am not just another author trying to sell a book. The prime purpose of the book is to educate the public and get them into chiropractic offices.

As I appear on talk shows, I often urge a congressional investigation on what (in my opinion) represents health care abuse and fraud by exclusion of superior methods. Are there any doubts? Consider the following:

- The United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) says that the majority of the 100,000,000 prescriptions given annually are not necessary. There are 80,000 unnecessary disc surgeries every year. (That's more than 1,500 every week!)

- The AHCPR says that 99 percent of the disc surgeries are not necessary.
- Physicians are now widely admitting that medicine is guilty of irresponsible and abusive overutilization of antibiotics, which has created more drug resistant bacteria. Medicine is losing the war against bacteria.
- According to the AMA, unnecessary medications kill 106,000 people annually (more than 2,000 every week), and they are the fourth largest killer of Americans today after heart disease, cancer and stroke.

Our approach must not be interpreted as an attack on good medicine, but as a plea to establish better interprofessional cooperation to minimize these tragic statistics.

### Licked Again

Do you recall how we tried as part of our centennial celebration to get a U.S. chiropractic commemorative postage stamp and failed? The Canadian Post issued three commemorative postage stamps honoring chiropractic, but the U.S. Postal Service decided to commemorate cartoon characters: Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, the Road Runner (beep-beep), and some entertainers who were not the best role models. I find this disgusting. I bring this issue up on talk shows, after mentioning all the great things chiropractic does.

We have a magnificent profession of which we can be justly proud. We should be more like our good-feathered friends the eagles, and less like timid chickens content with scratching in the dirt for crumbs.

I thank the people at *Dynamic Chiropractic* for their thoughtfulness, foresight and wisdom in forming the OVCA, to provoke some barnstorming and brainstorming on what this often-tattered profession can do to obtain its rightful place in health care.

Chiropractic needs to be assertive at the legislative level, and in the media, whether it be radio, TV, or in the newspapers. Our prominent presence will help educate people about chiropractic, and keep our opponents honest.

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