

Chiropractic, Public Health, and International Alphabet Soup

APHA, WFPHA, WHO, UN, CHC, IH, WFC, NGO, ATI, FCTC, FCA, ASH, INCAT, H-F-A AND CAT!

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Doctors of chiropractic have been urged for years to join the American Public Health Association (APHA) as the best way to enhance chiropractic credibility and communication, while integrating mainstream public health activities in the United States. But what about public health activities in other countries? Fortunately, the APHA is also an entrée into international health as well.

The APHA is a member of the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA), an organization of public health associations from most of the nations of the world. The WFPHA holds multinational meetings, and works with the World Health Organization (WHO) of the United Nations (UN) to coordinate efforts worldwide. Among APHA's 25 sections, which include the Chiropractic Health Care (CHC) section, there is a separate section called International Health (IH), which is for health care professionals having a special interest in international health issues, projects, programs, problems and priorities. Incidentally, any member of APHA can choose a primary section to which to belong to, plus as many secondary sections as desired. Some DCs have chosen IH as one of their secondary sections, with CHC as their primary section.

The chiropractic profession is fortunate to have the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC), a federation of the major chiropractic associations of the world. The WFC is headquartered in Toronto, Canada, and recently held its very successful biennial congress in Paris, France. WFC is concerned with standards of chiropractic education, licensing, practice and research on a worldwide basis. The WFC is a non-governmental organization (NGO) formally affiliated with the WHO, that was recognized a few years ago by the WHO after an endorsement by WFPHA in recognition of the contributions of many chiropractors to APHA activities.

One of the biggest of the WHO's health priorities is the Anti-Tobacco Initiative (ATI). Cigarette smoking and other tobacco product use is responsible for an absolutely incredible amount of preventable morbidity and mortality the world. The scientific evidence about tobacco's negative effects is now incontrovertible and overwhelming, and WHO is attacking the problem head-on with its initiative. WHO is proposing what amounts to a world-wide treaty called the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC.) This effort is supported by a coalition of organizations called the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) based in Bangkok, where it shares facilities with the Action on Smoking and Health Foundation (ASH) of Thailand. The WFC recently joined the FCA, and is also a supporter of the International Non-Governmental Coalition Against Tobacco (INGCAT). WFC leaders attended the "11th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health" (sic) last year in Chicago.

Leaders in government and health have echoed the sentiments of the U.S. surgeon general, the U.S. Public Health Service and the "Healthy People 2010" document in listing tobacco use as among the

biggest hazards to the health of the public. To its credit, Life University has been an early major leader in chiropractic's international battle against tobacco, and has provided support for many anti-tobacco efforts. The ICA and the ACA have also recognized the problem and support the ATI.

The WFC has established an international committee called the "Health-for-All" (H-F-A) Committee to coordinate with WHO's program priorities. The H-F-A Committee has chosen the Anti-Tobacco Initiative as its first project. Eight chiropractic leaders with expertise in public health from around the world make up this committee:

- Rand Baird,DC,MPH, chair
- Sira Borges,DC,MD, Latin America
- Evalie Heath,DC, Africa
- Deborah Kopansky-Giles,DC, North America
- Anthony Metcalfe,DC, Europe
- Efstathios Papadopoulos,DC, Eastern Mediterranean
- Bruce Vaughan,DC, Asia
- Inger Villadsen,DC, Pacific

The H-F-A Committee has named its project "Chiropractic Against Tobacco (CAT)." Watch for more about the CAT project in *Dynamic Chiropractic* and other chiropractic media in the ensuing months. Every doctor of chiropractic in the world, with any type of philosophy of practice (subluxation-based, neuromusculoskeletal condition-oriented, wellness and prevention-emphasis, etc.) can and should recognize the bigger picture of supporting the world's public health priorities. There is a bigger picture called globalization, and chiropractic is a part of it. CAT is a natural step for all of us.

Recognizing the importance of the public health slogan "think globally, act locally" and the concept of the global village, the APHA will be holding its 129th annual meeting October 21-25, 2001 in Atlanta, Georgia, and has chosen "One World, Global Health as its meeting theme this year. The featured speaker at the annual meeting will be Dr. Gro Brundtland,MD,MPH, director-general of the World Health Organization and the former prime minister of Norway. Over 12,000 leaders in government and health, over 550 exhibit booths and over 900 scientific and technical papers will be presented. There will be four sessions devoted to chiropractic papers, and chiropractic re-licensing credit for many states through Palmer College's postgraduate department.

Chiropractors are urged to join APHA, attend its annual meeting, think globally, and stay tuned for how you can support CAT- Chiropractic Against Tobacco!

For more information, see the WFC website at www.wfc.org, and the APHA website at www.apha.org.

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