

## That's Where The Patients Are

I had an office on the sixth floor of a building across from Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia. Don't let the name fool you. The influence of Samuel Hahnemann, founder of homeopathy, was long gone. It's an allopathic institution.

An orthopedic group from the hospital leased a large suite on the second floor. When things would be slow in my office and I was a bit "bummed out," I'd go for a walk and peek in their waiting room. It was filled.

"Ugh!" I screamed. What a masochist I am. Now I was really depressed!

We're still in a medical society, and people visit their MDs - a lot.

When Willie Sutton was asked why he kept robbing banks, he replied: "Because that's where the money is."

Where should we be looking for patients? Let's take a tip from Willie. Let's look in medical offices, because that's where the patients are. I want their patients, that is, I want the local MDs to start referring.

The trick is approaching them. Don't call them and say, "Hi, I'm your local chiropractor, and I'd like you to start referring patients to me." It won't work.

Here's a better approach: "I'm a chiropractor, and on occasion my patients ask me about or need medical care. I'd like to get together with you to discuss referring my patients to you and other MDs for a productive relationship." Tailor your words to their specialties.

People do occasionally need medical care, and it'd be nice to know local MDs with whom you can have a civil (and profitable) relationship. Now the fun starts. Ask if the two of you can meet, perhaps over lunch (you should pay the first time), and possibly tour the doctor's office.

Will they scream "quack" and slam down the phone? Maybe they would have done so 20 or 30 years ago, but not anymore (or hardly ever). Why? Well, I could cite the *Wilk* case, the Eisenberg studies, or changing patient preferences. But the best answer, I believe, is found in two words: managed care.

You think you've got troubles? MDs are checking themselves into stress clinics, committing suicide and suffering from possible financial ruin. They know patients are excited about our care, and alternative care in general. They think we're all rolling in dough, driving expensive foreign cars, with no cash worries. Yes, they want to meet you!

I'm reminded of a call I got one evening from my brother Jeff, an obstetrician-gynecological surgeon in Orlando.

"Tedd, how can I get to meet the local chiropractors? Managed care is killing me; I need to build my referral base," he lamented.

They want to meet you - so meet; be nice. At the first luncheon, the talk may be more about their practices; at the second luncheon tell them about your practice, invite them to your office; get their contact information so that you can send them your newsletter. You may wish to edit it specifically for the type of practitioner.

At the second get-together, don't forget to give them literature relating spinal care to health and disease. Copy or print out a few studies. If they're pediatricians, show them some research about chiropractic and infants and children. If they're OB-GYNs, show them research about chiropractic and menstrual disorders; PMS; pelvic conditions; and emphasize chiropractic and infertility. (About one in five couples have fertility problems, and OB-GYNs are often at a loss of what to do.)

Don't be too surprised if you get an added bonus. The doctor may become your patient and bring in his family for care.

Send your doctors a newsletter (either by mail or email). Have lots of lunches, and get lots of names. You might suggest speaking to the local medical society or some informal groups to introduce them to inter professional cooperation.

So that's it. It's a great way to get lots of referrals without spending (almost) any money, and it works. Feel free to call or write me with any questions. I also want to hear how your practice has jumped since using this, and how the lunches go. (You'll meet some characters!)

I know DCs who get half their new patient referrals from MDs using techniques similar to these. That's right - I said half. Remember, you do something unique, something they are not trained to do: locate and correct subluxations. Let them know that you're not a pseudo-MD, but a first-rate DC, and they and the rest of the world need your services. Let them know how people get sick, stay sick, have pain and die because of want of an adjustment.

Remember, almost all of D.D.'s first students were MDs or osteopaths. Who knows? Under your influence, your new referral sources might enroll in chiropractic colleges. Imagine how many referrals they could send to you then!

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