

## Chiropractic -The "Rodney Dangerfield" of Health Care

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I can't help feel that chiropractic has been somewhat like the Rodney Dangerfield of health care - it doesn't get any respect. If chiropractic were to disappear from the face of the earth tomorrow, I wonder if there would be much of a national outcry. To those who appreciate the true value of chiropractic, such a scenario would be a tragic setback for national health care. But why can't the general public and legislators see the obvious truth?

The fact that we had to sue the Health Care Financing Administration HCFA to keep the government from "bastardizing spinal adjusting into the gutter" is a major indicator. Apparently the government thinks that some fly-by-night "weekend wonders" can do the job of a well-trained chiropractor. Chiropractic is also scandalously isolated from many HMOs; however, there seems to be no national outrage or government investigation.

Our politicians certainly realize that our health care system is a national disaster, but they don't have a clue how to fix it. Government-based health care programs have tried to *ration the health care*, rather than demand health care based on the most effective methods. Some politicians believe that socializing health care would solve the problem. That would be like putting a Band-Aid over a hemorrhage. Socialization would ultimately bankrupt our government.

What is the real problem, and why can't our society see the obvious truth? It can't be that they don't know that chiropractic is therapeutically effective, since the United States, Great Britain, New Zealand and Canada all conducted some highly credible government studies and found that spinal manipulation is not only therapeutically superior, but scientifically based, impressively safe and cost effective. Then why is chiropractic still isolated from 98 percent of the hospitals in the U.S.? We should not only be in hospitals, but we should be gatekeepers helping to direct the patient flow and care.

It can't be that our politicians believe that our training is inadequate, since chiropractic colleges are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States government - much the same as medical schools.

I believe that our society has been so deeply programmed for so many decades by health care that it dogmatically embraces old institutionalized falsehoods and refuses to let go. This has been going on for a hundred years. It appears to be a human weakness. Just look at our current history:

A Canadian physician almost had to kill himself by ingesting the ulcer causing bacteria (*heliobacter pylori*) before the medical community accepted his insistence that the main cause of stomach ulcers was a bacteria, and not stress. It is now well established that the irresponsible and abusive over-utilization of antibiotics through the years has created a very serious problem of dealing with the more highly resistant bacteria to drugs. And what about the 90,000 unnecessary disc surgeries done

annually? That comes to more than 1,500 unnecessary surgeries every week, and yet there is no national outcry. These are major scandals that should be severely challenged. Of course, the decades of dishonest negative propaganda generated and orchestrated by the AMA against chiropractic has left deep scars that are still with us today. Deeply rooted prejudices and misinformation die hard.

Have you ever asked yourself what the biggest and most expensive type of health care fraud is in America? It is so rampant that most of us, including many chiropractors, can't see it. Let's list a few categories. There is fraud by falsification or exaggeration of an ailment. There is fraud by claiming treatments to insurance companies that were never given, or fraud by overutilization. But can you name the biggest and most expensive type of fraud? This type is more expensive than all of the other frauds combined, yet it goes generally unnoticed and unchallenged. It is called fraud by deliberate exclusion of safer, better methods.

What I find distressing is the fact that we chiropractors are intimidated and too often choose to look the other way, because we don't wish to offend the medics when they do something stupid or dishonest. I believe it is time for chiropractors to speak out and become the national conscience for rational health care.

The first step would be for all the state chiropractic associations to form speaker bureaus, and recruit and train all interested chiropractors on how to speak with accuracy, authority and impact afterward, they can go to the and press and expose this fraud. I'd be happy to go to your state and help set up a speaker bureau. This does not mean attacking or bashing medicine, but exposing the lack of objective and honest utilization of all health care disciplines based on individual merit.

This media exposure must come from multiple sources if it is to effectively deprogram society's views on health care. We need hundreds of chiropractors nationwide to accurately and effectively tell the truth, without mincing words. We need high profile and multiple sources of national exposure. The speaker bureau program is our only viable solution. It is the most cost effective and credible approach.

I am setting the pace by signing a one-year contract with the *Radio, TV Interview Report, (RTIR)*, a publication that goes out to more than 5,000 talk show hosts in the United States and Canada. I will carry monthly full-page ads for one year offering my services to appear on talk shows. These ads will be written by experts who use the material that they believe will grab the interest of producers.

The interviews are usually done by telephone. Talk show producers call me and set up an appointment for an interview. This gives me time to call the chiropractors in that town and alert them of the upcoming program.

I encourage listeners on these talk shows to call their local chiropractors and ask them how they can help the cause for honest health care. I urge them to call and write to their legislators on this issue. We must create some emotion and interest to activate the listeners to contact legislators. Together we can make big things happen. We have the most important weapon of all. It's called truth!

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