

Costa Rican Legislative Commission Votes Unanimously in Favor of Chiropractic Law

IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD CHIROPRACTIC EDUCATION

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica -- On March 16, 1999, two chiropractors and a lawyer sat before a government administrative commission of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica holding high the banner of chiropractic and forging ahead in the legislative process. The two chiropractors were Shawn Dill,DC, president of the Asociacion de Profesionales en Quiropractica (APQ) and founder of Quiropractica Mundial (QM), and Andrew Roberts,DC, vice president of the APQ and director of the chiropractic division of QM. Representing chiropractic was Victor Lobo Quiros, legal counsel to QM.

"I'm truly honored to have been the only chiropractor chosen by the government of Costa Rica to give expert testimony regarding chiropractic and our proposed law," said Dr. Dill. The three other experts solicited by the commission for their opinions were the minister of health, the president of a medical college, and the president of social security." What makes our appearance that much more significant is that the those three agencies contacted by the commission were requested responses by letter, as opposed to our requested live participation," noted Dr. Dill.

There seemed to be an air of negativity and indifference among the members of the commission at the beginning of the meeting. However, following the presentation, which detailed what chiropractic is, its history, educational requirements, worldwide chiropractic legislation, and our objective (specific Costa Rican chiropractic legislation), the tide quickly turned. Our three-man panel fielded questions from the commission. Before we left, the staunchest opponents became the strongest supporters.

In the words of commission member Jorge Sibaja, an attorney who is the deputy of the subheadquarters of the United Social Christian party, "I feel our support of this law shows our human side; we easily get caught up in strictly political issues. But like this law, our thoughts and actions are in the best interests and good of the costa Rican people."

After a day of deliberation, the commission reconvened. The first order of business was a motion to amend the proposed law according the suggestions of the president of the medical college, which included total absolution and freedom for all medical doctors practicing "chiropractic," with no culpability under this law. After careful consideration of the prior day's presentation, the commission summarily rejected this motion.

This was immediately followed by a call to vote. The vote was unanimous, 9-0 in favor of the proposed chiropractic law.

Legal counsel Victor Lobo Quiros, who had compiled more than 200 pages of documentation covering the legal considerations of a chiropractic law, wasn't surprised with the decision. "I expected nothing less. We were thoroughly prepared for all contingencies and we presented a solid, flawless case."

This landmark legislation enters the final phase of the Costa Rican governmental system. A panel of 19 in plenary session will review the findings of the commission and make a final vote.

It was a humbling experience. We knew the future of chiropractic in Costa Rica largely depended on our presentation. We are fully confident, as we were with the meeting with the commission, that our chiropractic law will also be passed.

We would like to acknowledge: the overtime put in by Gina Roberts, Mark Abbott, Juan Carlos Pozo and Brett Hanley, all chiropractors of Quiropractica Mundial (QM); the superhuman efforts of legal counsel Victor Lobo Quiros of QM; Alberto Soto, friend, patient, supporter and tireless worker; David Chapman Smith, Esq., secretary-general of the World Federation of Chiropractic, for his availability, immediate response, advice and unequivocal support; Don Petersen Jr., editor and publisher of *Dynamic Chiropractic*, who first gave ear to our efforts; Guy Riekeman,DC (president, Palmer College), George Goodman,DC (president, Logan College) and Leroy Moore,DC, (senior v.p. of Sherman College) for their help and letters of support; the Palmer International Alumni Association and Delta Sigma Chi for their contributions and support; Douglas Altamirano, good friend and always there to help; Francko Cartin Brenes, Gabriela, and all the employees of QM for their constant help; and most importantly, our patients and future chiropractic patients for their prayers and support.

Andrew Roberts

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