

Securing Our Future in Chiropractic

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Editor's note: This article was written while Dr. Necela was a student at Life Chiropractic College West.

A family member calls you after watching a "20/20" exposé and is concerned about your choice of chiropractic as a profession. "Isn't there something less controversial you'd rather do?"[BANNER]

A newspaper headline announces that chiropractic doesn't work. The loan officer informs you that chiropractors have the worst loan default rate of any health care professional.

Doctors lament that the chiropractic heyday of the '80s is long gone, and that the climate of the '90s is full of competition.

If questions and concerns like these keep you up at night, elevate your blood pressure, or spark debates among your friends and family without extinguishing your fire for chiropractic, you are an outstanding candidate for this association. Which association, you say? The answer is simple: any one with the purpose of advancing chiropractic!

In the October 18, 1998 issue of *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Guy Riekeman, DC, challenged the chiropractic profession to adopt "a vision that goes beyond our own individual success and short-term benefits." The FTC's investigation of Tedd Koren's publications and the recent article published in *JAMA* attempting to denounce the efficacy of chiropractic care are but two recent reasons why Dr. Riekeman's advice is timely and indispensable. To secure the success of chiropractic, and ultimately our own future, we need to begin the acceptance of responsibility for our chosen profession - now!

Students have the unique opportunity to help secure and shape the future of chiropractic by becoming members of a chiropractic association. Membership helps boost the power and credibility of the association we join by providing support to help advance chiropractic through advocacy, research and educational efforts.

Whether you get involved physically with the activities of your association, or simply send your financial support in the form of dues, your vital effort will strengthen the chiropractic profession. Think about it.

The American Dental Association's 141,000 members comprise about 75% of the dental profession and are dedicated to making dental hygiene a priority in our lives. Their message is so strong that it even affects people's buying decisions, as in buying ADA recommended toothpastes and toothbrushes.

We have 60,000+ doctors and 17,000 students of chiropractic, but not a united chiropractic association. (*Editor's note:* As noted in our June 28, 1999 issue, the total membership of the two U.S.

national chiropractic associations is less than 16%.) The danger lies in the paltry amount of support given to the ACA and ICA. Instead of bickering about which association is most effective or how we can go about uniting them, we need a vision of where chiropractic could be if we doubled the support for our national associations.

Imagine all that positive power bringing the chiropractic message to more people than ever. Research headlining national journals and magazines validating the widespread benefits of chiropractic. Television commercials extolling the virtues of chiropractic care and offering viewers an alternative to the mass hypnotism offered by endless drug ads. Pro-chiropractic laws being passed in all 50 states. Insurance companies recognizing the superiority and cost-effectiveness of chiropractic care. Products endorsed by chiropractic organizations that remind people that we are the premier specialists in caring for their health without drugs or surgery. All of these wonderful advancements can be a part of our future as chiropractors, but they won't happen without your help!

During my first quarter at Life West, our president, Dr. Gerard Clum, encouraged us all to join a chiropractic association. The act of joining, he asserted, is more important initially than which association you choose. This advice is full of foresight and wisdom. If you are unsure of which association would fit you, join any (or several) instead of waiting until you graduate. Chances are your philosophy will change as your vision of chiropractic matures, and the exposure to different viewpoints is certain to stimulate growth. On the other hand, if you have an association that is in alignment with your personal philosophy of chiropractic, sign up now! Either way, our chiropractic associations (and ultimately you) stand to benefit from your much-needed support right away.

Now that you have the basic facts that illustrate how you can help secure your own future and that of chiropractic, here are some additional perks that may stimulate your interest in joining a chiropractic association while a student:

1. Most offer membership at a discounted rate (usually \$30-40), which is often good for the duration you are a student.
2. Newly licensed DCs who have been student members of their association are usually given discounted rates.
3. Memberships include free subscriptions to publications (i.e., journals, newsletters, etc.) produced by the association.
4. There are discounts on everything from seminars to chiropractic-related products to rental cars, long distance rates, etc.
5. There is access to practicing DCs in your area or around the world who share a similar philosophy as you via organization directories and mentoring programs.

Ready to take the plunge? Congratulations and sincere thanks! Here are some associations that can help you support chiropractic on a national and international level:

American Chiropractic Association (ACA)
1701 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22209
800-986-4636
www.amerchiro.org

Canadian Chiropractic Association (CCA)
1396 Eglinton Avenue West

Toronto, ON M26 E2C Canada
800-668-2076
www.ccachiro.org

Federation of Straight Chiropractic Organizations (FSCO)
642 Broad Street
Clifton, NJ 07013
800-521-9856
[url=<http://www.straightchiropractic.com>]http://www.straightchiropractic.com[/url]

International Chiropractic Pediatric Association (ICPA)
5295 Highway 78 Suite D362
Stone Mountain, GA 30087
770-982-9037
[url=<http://www.4icpa.org>]http://www.4icpa.org[/url]

International Chiropractors
Association (ICA)
1110 North Glebe Road Suite 1000
Arlington, VA 22201
800-423-4690
www.chiropractic.org

World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC)
78 Glencairn Avenue
Toronto, ON M4R 1M8 Canada
416-484-9978
www.wfc.org

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