

## Alliance Progress Report

### RESULTS FROM THE FIRST YEAR OF CHIROPRACTIC ADVERTISING

Editorial Staff

Over the years, chiropractors have bemoaned the lack of a national chiropractic marketing campaign, not one led by one of the national associations, but by the profession.

That reality was realized when the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) and the Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) agreed to form the Alliance for Chiropractic Progress in 1997.

The Alliance members agreed that too many people were unaware of the qualifications of doctors of chiropractic and set a first-year goal of "raising the credibility of the profession and positioning chiropractors as highly qualified health care providers."

By the end of 1997, the Alliance had amassed a \$800,000 budget for 1998. The time had arrived to test the viability of a national chiropractic marketing campaign. The vehicles chosen to accomplish the task were three popular magazines:

*Prevention* -- The number-one health magazine in the United States, ranked 12th among all magazines, with a circulation of over 2.1 million.

*Consumer Digest* -- This publication has a national circulation of 1.2 million with a health/fitness feature in every issue (not to be confused with *Consumer Reports*).

*Health* -- With a national circulation of over one million, *Health* has won numerous awards including "Best Consumer Magazine."

Before the media campaign began, *Prevention's* research department surveyed their readers to determine the level of credibility held by their readers for chiropractic:

- Only 24% know the level of education needed to become a doctor of chiropractic.
- 51% understood what it takes to open an chiropractic practice.
- 65% knew that DCs don't use drugs or surgery.

The marketing campaign called for several different types of advertising:

*Prevention:*

1. Full-page color ads in the March, April, May, June, July, August, September and October issues.

2. Three-page booklet in the April and September issues.

3. "Community Health Service" awards to six DCs from six different parts of the U.S., with regional coverage in the magazine.

*Consumers Digest:*

1) Full-page color ads in the March, April, May, June, July, August, September and October issues.

*Health:*

1) Full-page color ads in the April, May, June, September and October issues.

Overall, the campaign scored over 61 million impressions in a target market of people most likely to respond to chiropractic. When Prevention surveyed their readers after the campaign, the responses showed gains in all areas. More people now know the educational level of DCs; what it takes for a DC to open a chiropractic practice; and that DCs don't use drugs or surgery.

The important question when the 1998 marketing program began was: "Can a chiropractic advertising campaign affect the way people think about chiropractic?" After eight months of consistent effort, the answer is an unqualified "yes."

The members of the Alliance are now meeting to plan the 1999 chiropractic marketing campaign. Among the topics under discussion are:

- a more aggressive advertising message;
  
- adding a public relations component to the program;
  
- incorporating a "rapid response system" to equip the profession to respond to negative media.

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