

Some Great News Items Which Bode Well for Chiropractic

The path of medical history is lined with small discoveries and small changes that have made changes of great magnitude. Two such events are occurring for the chiropractic profession. But before we get to these exciting changes, let's answer a question from F. Desimone, DC, of Clearlake, California.

Dr. Desimone writes, "Your articles in DC are informative and interesting. I started the article on silicone breast implants with the hope that I may see a problem which has not been addressed but was not discussed in your article. What is the role of the plastic packaging containing the silicone? There are patients whose silicone has not leaked, yet they have health problems. I am wondering if the material containing the silicone is to blame. Anything you can furnish relative to the toxic effects of plastic, either in implantation or otherwise as it relates to health will be appreciated. I shall pass such on to my patients."

Good question. Let's help our concerned colleague. Please send any information on this matter to me and I will make sure Dr. Desimone gets it.

Meanwhile, what are the two relatively small, yet historic, events which are likely to make great changes in chiropractic?

First, I want the field doctors who have graduated 10 or more years ago to look carefully at the doctors who have earned their doctor of chiropractic degree within the last 5-6 years. What you are going to see are doctors who are struggling and juggling to make ends meet because of runaway tuition costs. Graduating with \$80,000-\$120,000 student loans is no longer uncommon. Ouch!

If this was not bad enough consider the hodgepodge practices of many state board licensing examinations. Many of our graduates have to wait nearly one year to get their license despite having passed the board examination on the first try. Double ouch!

Stop and consider what happens to the graduate who lives in the cursed limbo between graduation and licensure. For one, they are in financial hell: no license, no income. Sure, they can earn income by working for a construction company or department store in the meantime; many are forced to do so. But this has got to hurt their pride. Triple ouch!

And here's the coup de grace. The doctors-in-waiting who want to exercise their skills by working for a chiropractor are paid atrociously low sums of money while they wait in limbo.

This is all about to change in many states across our country. State licensing examinations are headed towards accepting a national board competency-type examination which the student can take months prior to their graduation. Then, immediately upon graduation, the graduate can go to work with license in hand.

Now they graduate with heads held high. No fuss, no muss. No financial torture. (Take note: It certainly appears logical to conclude that there should be a decrease in the student loan problem picture). Hurray!

The doctor-graduate controls his/her own future from the get-go. No exploitation. Here, the self-motivated and strong willed doctors who have disciplined themselves via the rigors of academic and clinical study can plot their own success story far in advance of graduation and have confidence that they will not be thrown off track by the whimsical nature of some state licensing examination. Double and triple hurray!

This change in licensing structure will have a very positive effect upon the future of chiropractic. You field doctors all across this world have to realize that our doctor-graduates are the life-blood of our profession. If they do not thrive, we all perish. State examinations which condone protectionism are old news in this modern world. State examinations which cause exploitation of the doctor-graduate are also old news in this modern and competitive health care arena.

What's good news are licensing examinations which preserve the doctor's pride, dignity, self-worth, and control of their own destiny. The simple reality is that the cost of obtaining the treasured doctor of chiropractic degree is too high and we all must share in changing the manner in which these graduates enter into the profession.

So what is the second small event which is likely to lead to great changes in chiropractic? Dentistry! What? Yes, dentistry: dentistry and chiropractic.

Over the last few years I am seeing a small trend of doctors earning the DC along with the DDS degree. DCs go to dental school or DDSs go to chiropractic school. Either way, this bodes well for chiropractic. As you know I have long held the point of view that these two professions share much in common and should work closely together.

Here's a case in point. S. Knowlton, DMD, is now a student at Life College. He writes to me and declares, "I am proud to know another dentist has embraced chiropractic. It is the most wonderful profession, although I didn't think so a few years ago. At one time I kept trying to tell my office manager that she shouldn't go to a chiropractor, that I would be happy to write her a prescription for her pain. Personally, after a year of having carpal tunnel syndrome, I finally agreed to go to a chiropractor prior to undergoing surgery. I was open minded enough to go forward with the chiropractor's care, even though he said the problem was in my neck. In two weeks, my problem resolved."

Think about this letter for a few moments. How many times do you think this story gets repeated? How many dental minds are changed because of this dentist-soon-to-be-chiropractor? We need more doctors like Dr. Knowlton.

Other dentist-chiropractors and chiropractor-dentists exist and these doctors are the small but important stepping stones that bridge the gap of understanding between these two great professions.

What to Do?

It is simple. If you are thinking of expanding your clinical horizons, give dentistry a good hard look. There is a great need for your dual-degree services. Conversely, talk to dentists about enrolling in

dental school. Silly idea? Not when you consider that burn-out is a big problem in dentistry. Many a dentist will jump at the chance to obtain the dual degree if they only knew of the opportunities and enjoyment it brings to them.

So pass the word to our dental colleagues!

With each article I encourage you to write the questions you may have, commentaries on patient care, or thoughts to share with your colleagues, to me at the following address. Please include your return address.

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MAY 1996