

Those Funny MDs

ANOTHER LESSON LEARNED AT THEIR EXPENSE

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There are few publications as entertaining as the American Medical News. For those who have not had the pleasure, it is basically the Dynamic Chiropractic of the medical profession. Perusing its pages, one readily gains an appreciation of the issues that are most important to medical doctors.

The amusement comes as you read the manner in which the medical profession addresses many of the same issues that the chiropractic profession is grappling with. The MDs seem to have their own way of doing things.

Attorney George McAndrews once mused, "The wisdom of the American Medical Association (AMA) is held between the twin bookends of ignorance and arrogance." The American Medical News constantly reminds me of that observation.

The latest case in point can be found in the January 10, 1994 article, "AMA panel on guidelines sorts good from misguided."

It seems that the medical profession has a small problem. Instead of having one set of practice guidelines to wrestle with, modify and perfect, they have a mind boggling assortment of "more than 1,600 guidelines." Not able to muster all of the major organizations to develop practice guidelines, theirs have been "developed by 60 organizations."

The next time you lament over the chiropractic profession's seeming inability to act in a unified manner, you might remind yourself of the medical profession's quagmire of guidelines. Imagine being a hapless MD sorting through 1,600 sets of guidelines, many of them contradictory, before selecting a treatment protocol for your next patient.

In their infinite wisdom, the AMA has created the "Practice Parameters Partnership" which will be giving their "version of the Good Housekeeping seal of approval to guidelines developed appropriately." One can only wonder if perhaps the idea germinated from the recent formation of the Council on Chiropractic Guidelines and Practice Parameters last October (please see "Council on Chiropractic Guidelines and Practice Parameters Formed" in the November 19, 1993 issue).

Yes, we all agree that the Mercy Guidelines need to be reviewed and revised accordingly, but mercifully this profession is working from one set of guidelines instead of 1,600 sets.

To assure diversity and quality, the Council on Chiropractic Guidelines and Practice Parameters has incorporated not only representatives from all of the major organizations, but will involve the top people in many fields.

This council or federation approach appears to be the best form of unity for our profession given

certain realities. We may not be able to unite into one organization, but we can come together to discuss the issues and seek common ground and solutions.

While there are many areas of concern for chiropractic's future, believe it or not, this profession IS coming together to address the issues. Perhaps this is not a perfect form of unity, but it may in fact be stronger than one domineering organization with many splinters (a la the AMA).

If you find yourself frustrated by the events that are currently unfolding, take a good look at who we are and what chiropractic has already overcome. They couldn't keep us out of health care by arrests, prejudice, and exclusion.

Many people are on our side. The current thinking in health care has reverted to alternative conservative care -- where we have always been.

True, there are probably some hard times ahead. But hard times are old friends that we know how to work with.

You could have been a surgeon waiting for your favorite surgical procedure to be eliminated by a paper published in the next research journal.

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