

Staking the Claim: Part II

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Chiropractic has immediate access to staking its claim by using the "Objective Model for Chiropractic Research."¹ This is a critical issue and we must be aggressive in securing our position with the evidence to use in an offensive attack. Our objective must be to establish the efficacy of the impact of correction of vertebral subluxation complex with the chiropractic adjustment.

Chiropractic has grown to its present level of acceptance based on its clinical results. It works ... we've all seen the results. The time has come for the profession to show visual verification of how it works.

We haven't communicated the message of vertebral subluxation complex to the decision makers very well. The decision makers say, "Okay, you claim you correct vertebral subluxation complex, let's see the evidence. We've heard enough anecdotal stories, we've heard about your miracle cases, just show us documentation of what you do." That's where chiropractors begin to back pedal and use the old cliché -- "We don't have to prove it, it works." That attitude lies at the root of the dilemma in which chiropractic finds itself today. We submit to you that this is a very serious problem and we can't ignore it any longer.

The time has come for us to start documenting objectively, that we do change the nerve system when we make a chiropractic adjustment. This is what the decision makers are expecting from us.

In the past, lack of technology prevented us from demonstrating in a pure and simple manner exactly what we were doing when we corrected the vertebral subluxation complex. At the present time, we have the technology that can provide us with this information.

The role has changed today -- the present generation of chiropractors has the awesome responsibility of preserving chiropractic as a separate and distinct healing art, otherwise your grandchildren might be getting manipulation by prescription from the medical gatekeeper. Dr. Tim Johnson, ABC's medical consultant, stated on a "20/20" program on chiropractic: "You will be able to get the same treatment (manipulation) from a medical doctor." He was suggesting, why go to a chiropractor when you can get the same thing from a real doctor?

Try telling that to the chiropractor who has just completed professional schooling at a cost \$60,000 to \$70,000. Tell that to the practitioners of 10-20 years or more, still going to continuing education seminars to improve their skills. The chiropractic profession needs to stake our claim based on our adeptness in making chiropractic adjustment. Everybody seems to be getting into the act of manipulating. We must show the decision makers that there is an enormous difference between a manipulation and the chiropractic adjustment. Hard core data, that's what chiropractic needs. We need to show it objectively; we can't afford to delay any longer.

The Plan

It is crucial that the chiropractic profession begins to focus on that which we are trained and licensed to do. Every state board of chiropractic should be interested in acting quickly to spell out vertebral subluxation complex as ours by prior rights. We are the experts. Every state has laws which spell out practice parameters for doctors in all branches of the healing arts. These laws are for the purpose of identifying what the practitioner is allowed to do. Most important of all, these law protect the public health. It is the responsibility of the courts to make certain these laws are enforced.

If a person is performing a medical service and is not licensed to do so, the courts in that state must charge them with practicing medicine without a license. If a medical practitioner would elect to practice chiropractic, they must further their education, meet the requirements, pass the boards, and they can do so. At the present time the medical doctor isn't taught how to identify the vertebral subluxation complex or how to correct it in any medical college curriculum, therefore they are not qualified to treat patients for correction of the vertebral subluxation complex. They would be in violation of the law and at the same time represent a threat to the public health. Our profession can work within the law and have the courts make certain that the public health is protected. We need to initiate an aggressive campaign through our state licensing boards and the national associations that our objective is to stop anyone who is not qualified by prior education from encroaching into our field.

Let's take a bold stand on this issue and see it through. We have the legal talent available in the ICA and ACA to draw from. With support and requests of the membership they will be able to put their energies into establishing an offensive thrust for chiropractic.

It is urgent that the chiropractic profession establish a speakers network. We need to have authoritative speakers throughout the country to represent us on TV and in the news media. We must set the ground rules, the media needs to follow our protocol. This is the only way to stop sensationalism. This plan, properly and timely executed, will open a door of opportunity for us which we may never have again. Not only will we be able to tell the decision makers what we have to offer, but it will give us the opportunity of presenting the facts of chiropractic, and it won't cost us anything. We will need letters prepared jointly from the two national association's legal departments.

When we stake our claim the chiropractor will become the gatekeeper to the vertebral subluxation complex and not be limited to relief of back pain by prescription.

Reference

1. Stillwagon G, Stilwagon K. The objective chiropractic model for research, The American Chiropractor: Sept. 1993.

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